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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PSYCHO-HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF SEXUALITY WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

by

THOMAS JOSEPH DELISLE Ⓒ

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Psycho-Historical Interpretations of Sexuality Within the Christian Tradition" submitted by Thomas Joseph Delisle in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology.

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Date June 21, 1976

To my loving wife,

Judith.

ABSTRACT

The present study is a psycho-historical investigation into sexuality within the Christian tradition. Specifically, this study: (1) delineates the historical antecedents which helped fashion the Christian understanding of sexuality; (2) examines the historical emergence of the Christian sexual tradition; (3) provides psycho-historical interpretations of the negativism found in the Christian sexual tradition; and finally, (4) attempts to relate recent behavioral science theories with new theological understandings of sexuality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

Western man has been influenced directly and indirectly, individually and collectively, consciously and unconsciously by the Christian tradition. For two thousand years Christianity has shaped the behavior and attitudes of Western man and continues to act as a motivational factor in the lives of countless people. One intent of the behavioral sciences is to study forces which govern human behavior. It is, therefore, my conviction that the present research (which examines one of those powerful societal forces) is a legitimate investigation for the psychologist.

Recently, sexuality as understood within the Christian tradition has drawn considerable attention. Western man, reflecting on his past, is aware that the Church contributed a strange mixture of "lights and shadows" in this area. He is painfully aware that the Christian heritage fostered unclear and false concepts, and as well, encouraged fear and even disdain towards everything sexual. As a result, some contemporary Christians are ashamed of their heritage, formalized religion is reluctant to deal with the issues, and the Church continues to lose credibility.

Even more damaging is the presence of an unhealthy hold on sexuality in the emotional make-up of believers as well as non-believers. Many believers continue to be troubled by the persistent attitude that sex is tainted with evil. Non-believers as well as believers who have rejected partially or totally the Church's tradition on sexuality continue to be plagued by feelings of guilt. Psychoanalysis proposes that the full gamut of minor neuroses to major psychoses is induced by contradiction in the human psyche between conscious attitudes and subconscious feelings. Many of the guilt feelings Western man experiences in this area are explained by this phenomenon; certain sexual attitudes remain imbedded in the subconscious though they have been consciously abandoned. The Western psyche upon which two thousand years of Christian teaching has been written will not be wiped clean in one generation nor through a movement labeled "Sexual Revolution."

Another point to consider is the "schizophrenic" behavior our society exhibits in this area; on one hand the romantic glorification of "love," and on the other widespread pornography, prostitution, and promiscuity. These manifestations of sexual revolt often appear to be a reaction against traditional religious teachings that run counter to the natural promptings of human nature. Those who deny and suppress normal sexual feelings because of religious upbringing often express those same feelings later on in unhealthy ways.

Other reasons for this study will emerge during the progress of the thesis; basically the author's intention is to help the reader assess objectively the Christian tradition on sexuality and to remove the false gods enshrined over the centuries, not with the menacing axe of the iconoclast but with the mind and feelings of a researcher. If contemporary man is to live with his present, he must reckon with the flow of human history and come to grips with his inherited past.

Definition of Terms

Before stating the more specific objectives of the present study it is necessary to arrive at some understanding of the following terms:

Christianity is defined by some theologians as: "that relationship between man and God, that God Himself has established in Jesus Christ by his free, gracious, historical disposition and by his verbal revelation" (Rahner and Vorgrimler, 1965, p. 73). Within this study Christianity encompasses whatever man has experienced through his belief in Jesus Christ.

Church is a phenomenon with multiple and moving dimensions: human and divine, visible and invisible, juridical and mystical, immanent and transcendent, earthbound and destined for heaven. The various definitions of Church include any of these dimensions. However, the deepest dimension of Church is the communion of life between the Father and mankind in His Son Jesus Christ, through the gift of their one Spirit of love. Within this study, Church is generally referred to as the "People of God" believing in His Son Jesus Christ or else the official hierarchical structure which governs its members.

Tradition is the communication by the living Church of the Christian reality and the expression, either oral or written, of that reality (N. C. E., 1967). The media of this communication are the theologians, magisterium, faithful and the liturgy. Within this study, tradition is generally referred to as the written or oral communication of the Christian experience handed down to the present generation by the prominent religious leaders of the Church.

Sexuality is often referred to as any sexual behavior that culminates in orgasm. This definition, operational in nature, is too restrictive and narrow and covers only the genital aspect of sexuality. Within this study, sexuality is a broad term encompassing everything that the person is, thinks, feels or does during his entire life span as related to being male or female (Calderone, 1975). During the course of this study, the meaning of sexuality will evolve from the more restrictive concept of genitalia to the more inclusive concept of maleness and femaleness.

Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the history of the Christian tradition on sexuality and to provide psycho-historical interpretations of this tradition.

More specifically, an investigation is made to achieve the following objectives:

1. To delineate the historical antecedents which helped fashion the Christian understanding of sexuality.

   Chapter II entails an analysis of the relationship between sex and religion in ancient Near-Eastern cultic rites; the Jewish understanding of sexuality; and, the teachings of Jesus on sexuality.

2. To examine the historical emergence of the Christian sexual tradition.

   Chapter III, Part I, presents an overview of the Church's teachings from the Apostle Paul to the Medieval Ages. Special emphasis is given to Paul, whose "anti-sexual" statements are often misquoted, and to Augustine who formulated a theological understanding of sexuality still present in Christian thought. A brief study of the Patristic theologians reveals an inordinate fear and even disdain for sexuality. Finally, this section concludes that Monasticism and the Penitentials reflected a sexual negativism which developed in the early Church.

Chapter III, Part II, continues to examine Church history from the Medieval Ages to our contemporary time. Thomas Aquinas stands as the intellectual giant who contributes a more balanced picture of sexuality but with traces of male chauvinism. The Protestant Reformers, Luther and Calvin, attempt to eliminate the sexual negativism in their religious heritage but cannot state unequivically that sex is good and wholesome.

3. To provide psycho-historical interpretations of sexuality in the Christian tradition.

Chapter IV, Part I, investigates the Hellenistic influence on Christian thought. Dualism, the vital concept of Greek philosophy, contributed significantly to the negativism attached to sexuality in the writings of early Christian theologians.

Chapter IV, Part II, highlights three specific misconceptions concerning sexuality which influenced the Christian outlook on sexuality: semen waste is sinful, libidinal drive is a form of concupiscence, and sexual passions are evil.

Chapter V, Part I, studies the effects of clerical control on sexual attitudes. The hierarchy, by imposing sexual abstinence and celibacy on themselves, enhanced their role as "superior" members of the Church and attempted to control the sexual behavior of their subjects.

Chapter V, Part II, presents an overview of the Church's anti-feminist attitude and reasons for its appearance. It is postulated that the negative attitude towards sexuality and anti-feminism exhibited throughout Church history have mutually reinforced each other.

Chapter V, Part III, attempts to apply recent psychological theories which suggest that living in an Age of Transition contributes to an identity crisis.

4. To study contemporary views of sexuality from a psycho-theological perspective.

Chapter VI reflects on current sexual attitudes that are based in part on our Christian heritage. An attempt is made to relate findings in the behavioral sciences with new theological understandings of God, religion, and sexuality.

Limitations of The Study

Because of the nature of this thesis, I find it important to underline some basic assumptions:

1. History must always aim at the literal truth, the objective facts of the past. Nevertheless, the most objective history is still a selection and an interpretation, necessarily governed by special interests and based on particular beliefs. Every historian looks subjectively at the objective facts. My Catholic background, steeped in Catholic theology and philosophy, necessarily governs my choice of selection and interpretation; however, this affords both disadvantages and advantages in the complex issues of this thesis.

2. Because of our human nature every historian must necessarily pass, at least implicitly, some ethical judgments on history. However, though I might pass judgment by condemning the alleged act of self-mutilation (castration) by Origen, I nevertheless take into account that this act for him might have been done out of moral idealism or religious fervor.
3. No one can claim absolute truth about man and his universe. My primary objective in this historical study is to underline the facts that I understand as important, lending insight to them and making these "understandable facts" useful for contemporary living purposes.
4. This is a study of sexual attitudes found in Christianity, therefore neither ethical standards nor sexual behavior will be dealt with in a rigorous or systematic manner.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUALITY

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

An historical study of the attitudes of the Christian Church towards sexuality reveals a consistently negative outlook (Briffault 1931, Cabot 1937, Davies 1954). Recent studies (Cole 1954, Mace 1970) demonstrate that this negative attitude does not originate within the message of Christianity itself but rather from outside forces that have had profound influences on the Church's teaching.

In this chapter we shall overview Christ's message on sexuality and the historical antecedents leading up to the time of Christ. It is the purpose of this chapter to present three historical contributions which are foundational to an understanding of the Christian concept of sexuality. These include: (1) the fertility cults of three ancient civilizations of the Near East which contributed to the Hebrew understanding of sexuality; (2) the sexual practices of Israel and their interpretations; and, (3) the teachings of Jesus and his interpretations of human sexuality.

In relation to these contributions, an attempt will be made to describe each historical setting, to point out its treatment of sexuality, and to show its relationship to Christianity.

PART I: ANCIENT NEAR-EASTERN CIVILIZATION: FROM FERTILITY CULT TO WORSHIP

Introduction

Christianity has its roots in human history and in the belief that a supreme being called God has intervened in that history. An account of that intervention is recorded in Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch in the Bible. It is the Judeo-Christian belief that God called a man named Abraham to his service (Gen. 12:1-3) and Abraham responded in faith (Gen. 12:4,15:6). God became the personal God of the Fathers (Gen. 31:5, 29, 42, 53 etc.) and this personal relationship became determinative of the patriarchal history. As a result of this relationship, initiated by the free choice of God, the promise of a great posterity and of the land was made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-2, 13:14-16, 15:5, etc.), renewed to his descendants (Gen. 26:2-5, 28:13-15), and was to be fulfilled in the people of Israel (Gen. 15:13-14, 18-21) (Brown, Fitzmyer, Murphy, 1968).

Abraham was a descendant of Shem in the region of Chaldea of a town called Haran between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Around 1850 B.C., during the Middle Bronze Age, when Egypt was in control of the Syro-Palestinian coast, Abraham and his large family left the land of his father and journeyed to the land of Canaan (Gen. 12).

From Canaan they made their way into Egypt (cf. the story of Joseph, Gen. 37). After a peaceful co-existence with the Egyptians they were forced into labour camps in order to build the store houses of the Pharoah, Ramses II. Around 1280 B.C., because of the cruelty inflicted on the Israelites by the Egyptians, a revolt broke out and their leader, Moses, lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt into the land of Canaan (Exodus).

Though Abraham had numerous theophonies whereby it is believed God spoke to him, the Israelites never came to a clear understanding of monotheism until the time of Moses, 600 years later. Consequently, they respected and evoked the pagan gods of their neighbors. But as the Israelites became more aware of the nature of their god they developed a form of worship distinct from those of the surrounding nations. This distinction or contrast contributed significantly to their understanding not only of their god but of themselves and in particular, of their sexuality. A brief overview of the fertility cults of Israel's neighbors will illustrate this point.

Egypt

The great god of Egypt was Amon, the sun god, however equally popular among the masses were the gods Isis and Osiris. Isis was the Great Mother, the rich black earth around the Nile. Her consort was Osiris or Bacchus, the fertilizing Nile. He was depicted as a great bull with pronounced genital organs which symbolized his great sexual powers. The Egyptians believed that the copulation of Isis and Osiris in the sky produced the rich harvest of the Nile valley. If the harvest was poor it was believed to be caused by an angry Osiris refusing to copulate with his wife.

Because of their beliefs, the Egyptians gave divine honors to the phallus and would display it publicly during the feast days of Osiris. Herodotus describes such a ceremony:

> The Egyptians celebrate the festival of Bacchus in much the same way as the Greeks, but, instead of a phallus, they have invented a figure about a yard high which can be worked with a string. These figures are carried in procession by women, and, as they go along, they manipulate the phallus, which is as long as the figure is tall. (Cited in Dulaure, 1890, p. 31.)

For centuries, Egyptians worshipped Osiris and Isis as the benefactors of their harvest. Numerous monuments still remain bearing witness to phallicism or sex worshipping that once flourished in ancient Egypt. Still present in their ancient temples are gods with impressively large sex organs and the symbol of crux ansata, i.e. the cross with a handle, interpreted by some scholars as a symbol of sexual union and vigor.

Babylon

Babylon (today called Iraq) had as many as sixty-five thousand gods during the time of King David in the 9th century B.C. There was a god for each household, but reigning supreme in this pantheon was Marduk, god of the sun, and his wife Ishtar, goddess of fertility.

Similar to the Egyptians, they attributed to these fertility gods the fecundity of their crops. A contemporary of theirs, Plutarch, states it thus:

> The sky appeared to men to perform the functions of a father, as the earth those of a mother. The sky was the father, for it cast seed into the bosom of the earth, which in receiving them became fruitful and brought forth, and was the mother. (Cited in Westropp and Wake, 1970, p. 24.)

The Babylonians revered phallic symbols in religious processions not so much because they represented sexual pleasure but because they symbolized generators of new life. Every Babylonian temple housed a number of cultic prostitutes whose religious purpose was to have coition with the male worshippers. It was believed that the gods would be pleased and encouraged to do likewise, thus ensuring a fertile crop. Though these practises eventually degenerated into sexual orgies with little religious significance attached, sacred prostitution was once considered an important religious function in the community.

The Babylonians had a number of customs that merged their religious beliefs with their daily experiences. Herodotus describes one of these customs:

> Every native woman is required, once in her life, to sit in the temple of Venus and have intercourse with some stranger ... When a woman has once seated herself, she must not return home until some stranger has thrown a piece of silver into her lap and lain with her outside the temple. He who throws the silver must say: 'I beseech the goddess Mylitta to favor thee'; for the Babylonians call Venus, Mylitta. (Cited in Dulaure, 1890, p. 31.)

Though it is not certain what this custom signified most likely it was a sacrifice of virginity to the goddess of fertility (cf. Babylonian captivity (597 B.C. - 538 B.C.) when the Israelites came into contact with these customs).

Canaan

Canaanites is a generic term used to designate members of the numerous tribes that occupied the region in and around what we now know as Palestine. They were the closest neighbors of the Israelites, and worshipped a group of deities under the name of Baal. His consort was Asherah, goddess of fertility who had a sizable following in Jerusalem during the career of Jeremiah (Jr. 44:15-30).

The Canaanites erected wooden pillars called "asherah" as objects of cultic devotion. In their temples could be seen phallic symbols similar to the lingam found in the Indian temples of Shiva. They believed that their gods (often depicted as male/female pairs copulating) created the earth and caused the crops to grow. Their temples housed both male and female cultic prostitutes. These cultic practices were abhorrent in the eyes of the Israelites and numerous references are made to them in the Bible (Jg. 3:7, 8:33, Ho. 2:18, 2 K. 10:18).

Origin

Dulaure, (1890) states that phallic worshipping flourished for centuries in Egypt, Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, and is still being enacted in India and Africa. Its origin derives from the Sun Worship of the Egyptians as far back as 4500 years ago. The Egyptians witnessed the phenomenon of the Equinox of Spring and saw in the heavens the Zodiac, sign of the bull. They equated the appearance of new life during the spring months with the sign of the bull. Consequently the bull was worshipped as the god of fertility; thus, in their religious processions the masculine genitals were unusually large because they were those of the bull and not of humans.

The Greeks followed the Egyptian's worship of the bull and especially the Mendesian goat, Pan. The Egyptians passed their fertility rites on, not only to the Greeks, but as well to the Romans, under the name Bacchus. The Canaanites had their Baal; Phoenicia, Adonis; Persia, Mithra; India, Brahma, Vishnu, and Astarte. Each country had their own version of the fertility gods.

Cultic Reasons

The Egyptians, Babylonians and Canaanites participated in fertility cults for two main reasons:

1. They believed in a cyclical view of history. History was composed of a yearly birth and death cycle. It was necessary for Osiris, Marduk and Baal to give of themselves in coition to their consort if the land was to come alive again in the spring and produce a rich harvest.
2. These people believed that they could control the action of their gods through imitative acts. If the gods saw man and woman copulating in the sacred places they would consequently imitate them, thereby bestowing upon their followers the natural bounty of their fertilization. From this natural productivity, cultic prostitution and religious sexual orgies came into existence.

Israel's God

Because of their beliefs, Israel gradually developed a way of worship alien to those around her. There were no sex symbols in her temples (though at times they were introduced and later removed) and no cultic prostitutes. The central temple in Jerusalem contained the holy ark and the other cultic sites of Schechem, Shiloh and Gilgal were simply considered holy places. The theme of Holy Land eventually became associated with all of Yahweh's land given to the descendants of Abraham.

Throughout the duration of Hebrew history in Canaan the priests, and especially the prophets condemned the fertility cults and reminded the people of the "true" nature of their God: Yahweh is not a deity of nature, He is not tied into the cycles of nature, ("I am who I am") and is timeless. There is no beginning nor end for Yahweh and for him, history is not cyclical but rather linear. God intervenes in history with a purpose and is directing man towards a specific end that only He understands. He does not reveal himself in the cycle of seedtime and harvest but rather in the affairs of men.

Yahweh does not have a consort. He is neither male nor female. No one knows what God looks like so no graven images are to be made of Him. He will not stoop down to man's foibles and inventions. Because men copulate with the sacred prostitutes does not mean God will imitate them. He is the Creator and no man has control over Him.

Conclusion

The sharp contrast between the fertility cults of Israel's neighbors and her own concept of worship helped shape her understanding of sexuality. The fertility cults tore sexuality away from personality and treated it as a symbol of nature. However, the Israelites understood sexuality within a personal and social context. Sexuality was personal because Yahweh said "it is not good for man to be alone" and he should have a helpmate respecting and caring for each other. It was social because sex was thought of in terms of the community. From one of these sacred unions will come the Savior of the People. Finally, sex was seen as natural and like everything else to be used for the greater glory of Yahweh. They refused to believe in any magical powers that would excite the gods.

For a closer scrutiny of a sexual interpretation by the Hebrews we now turn to the Bible. Within this tradition Jesus will be born and upon which He will develop the original Christian heritage on sexuality.

PART II: SEX IN THE JEWISH TRADITION: A BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Introduction

Christianity has its historical roots in the Jewish tradition. Jesus was a Jew and His teachings on sexuality reflect this Jewish background. The Bible contains this written tradition, a dialogue the Jewish people had with their God over a two thousand year period. This spiritual conversation is couched in the events of their particular history. To truly understand its message one must grasp the fine nuances of the times and the ways in which these events were recorded; this formidable task is, for the most part, left to the exegetical scholar. The following interpretations of sexuality in the Jewish tradition are taken from numerous scholarly sources, and reflect this author's synthesis of writings in the field.

Sex is Good

In Hebrew literature sex is rarely treated as evil; rather, it is described as something sacred and good to be used "properly" for the greater glory of God. The first book of the Bible states that God said: "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). The Creator therefore cast man into a deep sleep (symbol of man's helplessness in this act of creation) and fashioned from his rib (ancient Hebrew symbol of that which is dearest and closest to man's heart) a woman. Then man exclaimed: "This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). The author of the Yahwist's account concludes: "Now both of them were naked, the man and the wife, but they felt no shame in front of each other" (Gen. 2:24).

What is most profound in the Priestly tradition of the Genesis passage is that God said: "Let us make man in our image" and the author concludes with: "in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). We see in the wisdom of this passage that the ancient Hebrew writer understood God's image as encompassing both the male and female principle.

Sex is Social

The individual does not live in isolation but as part of society, therefore, sexual life is not exclusively personal but as well a part of one's clan or family. Sexual coitus was seen as a sacred duty, a fulfillment of the Covenant (Tb. 6:11-13). There was a sense of destiny not only for himself but for his people; from an Israelite would come a Savior, a Messiah. The Israelites believed that a man who was a celibate failed in his religious duty. "He who remains single diminishes the likeness of God" is an old Rabbi saying reflecting this attitude.

Circumcision

This rite was originally an initiation to marriage and family life, and later became a sign of God's promise of fruitfulness.

But much deeper in meaning is the notion of sacrament; the sexual organ after circumcision carried a sacred mark. The Jewish boy was set apart to use his penis for his own needs as well as for the greater glory of God. It was the sign of the Covenant of perpetuity between the people and Yahweh (Gen. 17:1-14). Through this sign God is reminded of his Covenant and man of the obligations deriving from his belonging to the Chosen People.

Sex in Marriage

Only in marriage did sex have meaning. Man had exclusive rights over his wife's body but not over her total person. Though she was considered her husband's property, Hebrew women were respected and at times played an important role in the history of Israel as evidenced in the stories of Esther and Ruth. As a wife it was vitally important that her children were born of her legal husband. Another man's seed could falsify his family tree, and in Jewish tradition this was thought of as being intolerable. The Hebrew male believed that he procured his immortality through his children; that he lived on through his children. It was, therefore, important that his wife didn't "cheat" on him and that she bear only his children. By the same token one should not violate the marriage rights of others (Ex. 20:14, Gen. 20:6, Lv. 18:20). An example of this, is Joseph refusing the advances of Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:9) or of Susanna preferring to die rather than to commit adultery (Dn. 13:23).

Sexual Sins

Adultery was repeatedly condemned (Jr. 29:23, Jb. 31:9-12, Sr. 23:23, Ws. 14:26). Rape, loss of virginity while still in one's father's house, and prostitution were consistently repudiated (Gen. 34:7, Dt. 22:21, Sm. 13:12, Pr. 23:27, 29:3, 31:3). Cultic prostitution was especially condemned (Dt. 23:18-19) although many fell into the practice because of its sexual attraction (2K. 14:24, Am. 2:7, Os. 4:14). Other aberrations such as homosexuality and sodomy (Gen. 19, Lv. 18:22, Dt. 22:5, Jg. 19:22-24), incest (Dt. 27:20, Lv. 18:8-11), onanism (Gen. 38:8-10), bestiality (Ex. 22:18) were also condemned. However, the original reasons given for these condemnations were often misinterpreted by Christians. Later on, our study will show that a number of these misconceptions contributed significantly to a negative attitude towards sexuality. The following Biblical passages will demonstrate how Christians misinterpreted certain passages of the Bible in order to support their own views on sexuality.

Story of Onan: Masturbation

Considerable misinterpretation by Christians of the story of Onan (Gen. 38:8-10) has existed for centuries. Based on this passage, any wasting of semen especially through masturbation has historically been condemned by the Christian Church. However, in this particular passage it is not the wasting of semen that is condemned but rather the breaking of the law of sedirate. Onan was destroyed by God not because he wasted semen but because he didn't perform his brotherly and religious duty to sleep with his sister-in-law Tamar, in order to procure a child for his dead brother. This would have ensured his dead brother's immortality who died without having children. Instead Onan withdrew, spilled his semen, and broke the law of sedirate. Consequently, God punished him not for spilling his seed but for neglecting his religious obligations (Mace, 1970).

Adam and Eve: Sexual Sin

The sin of Adam and Eve is often interpreted as a sin of sex. A close scrutiny of the Genesis passage proves otherwise. The Hebrew people consistently understood sex as good and wholesome and part of one's religious duty. They never centered their morality around sexuality. The sin of our first parents can be more legitimately understood as the Biblical sin of "hardness of hearts". This is repeatedly stated throughout Biblical writings. It is the turning away from God as the master of all created things, by placing oneself above the Creator by an act of defiance or selfishness (Monden 1965).

Sodom and Gomorrah: Homosexuality

This popular passage (Gn. 19) is often quoted by Christians as God's fiery punishment upon people who indulge in sexual excesses but particularly homosexuality. On closer scrutiny of the passage one can see that God punished the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah not only for sexual perversion but for sinning against the Oriental courtesy of providing hospitality to strangers. It is clear that homosexuality was seen by the Israelites as an abhorrence in the eyes of God (Jg. 19:22-26; Lv. 18:22), but the violation of the sacred duty of hospitality is considered the more serious crime in this passage (cf. Jerusalem Bible footnote, Jg. 19h).

A second reason why Christians have denounced homosexuality is based on the passages of Gen. 19 and Jg. 19:22-23 and 1 K. 14:22-24 and 1 K. 22:47. "The remaining male sacred prostitutes of those who had lived in the time of his father Asa, he swept out of the country" (1 K. 22:47).

Homosexuality is condemned in these passages because it was a cultic practise contrary to the sacred rites of the Hebrews (Cole, 1959).

David and Bathsheba: Adultery

David was severely punished by Yahweh for his adulterous act with Bathsheba (2S. 11,12). Many Christian churchmen have used this passage to infer that sex is evil and punishable by God. However, impartial analysis of the customs of the times reveals that the sex act itself was never evil in the eyes of the Israelites. What was thought evil in the act of adultery was the usurping of the sexual rights of the husband and the defilement of the family's bloodlines.

In the patriarchal society of the Israelites the husband held exclusive rights over the body of his wife. No one was allowed to violate this right--not even King David (Ex. 20:14, Dt. 5:18, Lv. 20:10).

David's sexual relationship with Bathsheba violated two fundamental principles of Jewish law. The author of Samuel speaks of Yahweh punishing David by the death of his firstborn not only for his sexual sins but also because David had Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) killed, in order to cover up his wrongdoing. David had sinned, not because he had sex but because he had someone killed and usurped the property rights of another.

Conclusion

The concepts of sex referred to in the Bible are, for the most part, natural, wholesome and deeply linked with the religious life of men and women. It was good because Yahweh declared that man should have a helpmate and they should become as one body. Sex also had a religious and social dimension; from one of their unions, a Savior would be born and through their progeny their immortality was assured.

In those instances where sexual aberrations are condemned it is not because sex is viewed as inherently evil but, rather, because its abuse reflected a sin of another nature such as injustice, worshipping idols, or lack of hospitality. It appears that the Christian Church has misinterpreted Biblical passages in order to support its own view on sex.

When the Hebrew writers of the Bible reflected on the love their God had for them, they sometimes expressed it in terms of the erotic love a young man and woman have for each other. The following passage comes from one of the sacred books of the Bible and clearly demonstrates the Hebrew's appreciation of erotic love as a reflection of God's love.

> While the King rests in his room
> my nard yields its perfume.
> My beloved is a sachet of myrrh
> lying between my breasts ...
> How beautiful you are, my love,
> how beautiful you are.

Your eyes are doves.
How beautiful you are, my beloved,
and how delightful!
All green is our bed. (Sg. 1:12-16.)

In the Hebrew tradition God is found at the heart of erotic love as well as in all other forms of love. There was absolutely nothing evil in sex nor in its expression. It was considered a gift from God, to be appreciated and enjoyed.

Christ is a Jew, reflecting the healthy attitudes that most Jews at the time held towards human sexuality. For Him, sex is like all the other gifts of God, blessed. However, He brings to our understanding of sexuality a richness and depth heretofore unexpressed in Jewish thought.

PART III: JESUS AND SEX

Introduction

The ethical teachings of Jesus are dominated by naturalistic monism derived primarily from his Jewish heritage. The world is understood as a positive, wholesome place though in need of Redemption. He preaches a message of unity. He seeks unity between man and the Father, between man and man, and unity within oneself. The basis of this unity is love. The manifestation of perfect integration is in the Resurrection whereby man is made whole within himself and with his God and fellow man.

Jesus rarely speaks directly to the topic of sex. Whenever it was brought up, as in the case of the woman caught in adultery, he applies three basic principles of life:

1. Jesus insists on personal integrity, i.e., man must be true to himself and his actions must follow his deepest convictions. He was extremely harsh towards the Pharisees:

   > Alas, for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who are like whitewashed tombs that look handsome on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of corruption. In the same way you appear to people from the outside like good honest men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (Mat. 23:27-28.)

   On another occasion He spoke of inner integrity when He said:

   > There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. (Lk. 6:43.)

   and:

   > You will be able to tell them (Prophets) by their fruits. (Mat. 7:16.)

   Yet, Jesus is quick to add that one should not judge the actions of others because the inner motivation behind the act is hidden to most men.

2. Jesus insists that each person be treated as an individual and that specific, unbending laws do not apply to everyone. He often adapts the law to individuals as in the case of his disciples eating corn on the sabbath:

   > The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is master even of the sabbath. (Mk. 2:27-28.)

   Once again while speaking to the Pharisees he exclaimed:

   > How ingeniously you get round the commandment of God in order to preserve your own tradition! (Mk. 7:9.)

3. Jesus is constantly emphasizing the law of love. He claims that as His Father loves him so must his disciples love one another.

In a response to the Pharisees' questioning about the law of love he replies:

> You must love the Lord your God with all
> your heart, with all your soul, and with
> all your mind. This is the greatest and
> first commandment. The second resembles it:
> You must love your neighbour as yourself.
> On these two commandments hang the whole
> Law, and the Prophets also. (Mat. 22:37-40.)

Whenever Jesus met someone during his ministry: Mary Magdelene the prostitute, the rich young man, the woman caught in adultery, Nicodemus the teacher, Zacchaeus the tax collector, he always treated each person as an individual, refusing to judge only the outward behavior, and went directly to the heart of the person, in a spirit of love and acceptance. The following passages are specific instances in which Jesus dealt with sexual behavior and applied the basic principles of inner integrity, individuality and the law of love.

Adultery

Jesus said: "You have learnt how it was said: 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say to you, if a man looks at a woman lustfully he has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mat. 5:27-29). Jesus is not condemning the sexual attraction a man might have for a woman, nor is he recommending an ascetic life which excludes all sensual pleasures. Rather, he is applying the first principle of inner integrity; man's outward actions should be consonant with his inner desires and motives. He espouses a similar principle with regard to murder, divorce, praying and almsgiving. Jesus is speaking of sincerity. Grant (1951) reflects on this point in the following passage:

> In every case what Jesus does is lay bare the inner motive behind the outward deed, the real orientation of the soul toward God or possessions or other persons. The great characteristic of his teaching is its depth, and also its surpassing realism. No other teacher ever searched more deeply into the hidden recesses of men's hearts in examining their conduct, character, or motives. (p. 160.)

Divorce

Divorce is dealt with in two different forms in the first Gospel and once in Mark and Luke. In Matthew it is found in the context of the Sermon on the Mount:

> It has also been said: 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal'. But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Mat. 5:31-23.)

Matthew's later passage, (Mat. 19:1-12) follows closely Mark's account of Jesus' teachings (Mk. 10:2-12). Luke sums up the teaching in these words: "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery, and the man who marries a woman divorced by her husband commits adultery" (Lk. 16:19). Most New Testament scholars agree that Matthew's insertion of "except for the case of fornication" represents a later addition to the text. Though Matthew makes an exception in the rigidity of the law, it was not his source, and Jesus seems to have regarded the marriage bond as absolutely indissoluble throughout life.

It must be understood that this passage in Matthew is within the context of the Sermon on the Mount. Not only divorce was condemned but also the taking of oaths, hatred of enemies, anger as well as murder, lustful thoughts as well as adultery. All Jesus' teachings in this passage represent an uncompromising demand that men live up to the highest ethical standards. But, it must be remembered that Jesus is laying down principles of the Christian life and not setting up a legislative system. Reinhold Niebuhr calls them "impossible possibilities". To make these principles absolute laws governing Christian behavior is to miss Christ's message judging men on external actions, and erecting a new legalism which Jesus fought when confronting the Pharisees. These are ideal, absolute, ethical demands towards which a Christian strives.

Celibacy

The disciples must have reacted to Jesus' pronouncement on divorce for affixed to it is a passage that speaks to the question of celibacy.

> The disciples said to him, 'If that is how things are between husband and wife, it is not advisable to marry'. But he replied, 'It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. There are eunuchs born that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made so by men and there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can. (Mat. 19:10-12)

Jesus evidently is justifying celibacy (as in his own case) for the sake of the Kingdom. "Here ... Jesus touches on a delicate subject to teach his disciples a very important lesson, viz. that the claims of the Kingdom of God are paramount; that when necessary even the powerful impulses leading to marriage must be resisted out of regard to them" (Bruce, 1897, p. 247). In this passage Jesus is not degrading sex as some Christian interpretations conclude. He had just finished talking about the beauty and indissolubility of marriage. "They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide" (Mat. 19:6). Christ was not urging his Apostles to be celibates, for to do so would be folly because the majority of them were already married men. He was simply stating that the kingdom comes before all else and if one feels the necessity of total dedication to this kingdom within a celibate context then this is good.

It must be remembered that celibacy was never held in high esteem among the Israelites. On the contrary, one did not perform his religious duty by remaining celibate. What prompted Jesus to reverse this ancient Jewish position? Jesus claimed that the destiny of the Israelite nations was not realized in an earthly kingdom but rather in a spiritual one. Never could the Jews conceive of the promises of Christ: "Come you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34). Christ is speaking of an eschatological kingdom; one at the end of time when all creation will be brought to fulfillment in its Creator. Rahner & Vorgrimler (1965) state that the kingdom applies to the present insofar as the last days have begun in Christ. Contemporary theology understands the present kingdom residing within the heart of man wherever the spirit of God is found.

For the Jews at the time of Christ, such a spiritual kingdom was extremely hard to comprehend or accept. That is why the celibacy issue was difficult to understand unless the echatological dimension was first understood "Let anyone accept this who can" (Mat. 19:12) for the kingdom is here and is yet to come. Celibacy is one way of preparing for the kingdom. Although some Christian denominations claim that celibacy is the best way of preparing for the kingdom, nowhere in the teaching of Christ does he state that the celibate style of life is superior preparation for his Second Coming.

Marriage and Resurrection

Appearing in all three versions of the Synoptic Gospels is the question of marriage in the Resurrection. The Sadducees (who did not believe in any resurrection of the dead) tried to trap Jesus by giving him a hypothetical case of a woman married to seven brothers who had each died in their turn. They had asked him: "In the Resurrection whose wife will she be?" (Mk. 12:18-27, Mat. 22:23-33, Lk. 20:27-40). Jesus replies by affirming his belief in the Resurrection, scolding the Saddusees for their lack of faith and understanding of the Scriptures. His reply to them: 'When they rise from the dead they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven" (Mat. 22:23). Jesus is not speaking here of the resurrection of pure spirits but of the body as well. He is stating that in the Resurrection, the exclusive relationships of this world are done away with. He is not condemning sex nor the flesh for he wouldn't have professed belief in the resurrection of the body. He is simply stating that in the state of Resurrection all men love one another in God and the exclusiveness of the marital relationship no longer applies.

The Adulterous Woman

There is one final passage in the fourth Gospel of the woman caught in adultery (Jn. 8:1-11). Once more Jesus goes straight to the heart of the matter. He is in search of inner integrity. He refuses to apply a general law to her and treats her with the law of love. He speaks healing words to her: "Neither do I condemn you" (Jn. 8:11), and rebukes the hypocrites who had gathered to stone her. Jesus is not disturbed by the woman's sexual sins but more by the self-righteousness of those judging her. It is the sin of hardness of heart that is clearly condemned by Jesus. Though he tells her "to sin no more" he treats her with kindness and compassion.

Conclusion

Compared to his other teachings, Jesus has said little in the area of sex. Whenever he did address himself to the subject, he is guided by the three principles mentioned earlier: man is to strive for inner integrity, he is to be treated as a unique individual, and he is to be guided by the law of love. He never spoke as though flesh was evil. On the contrary, he reiterated the Genesis message that the world, created by God is good. He promised his disciples that the created world would be brought to its fulfillment in the final days. As for man in his flesh, he claimed that there would be a resurrection not only of his spirit but his flesh as well. The Gospels bear witness that he himself had risen in the flesh after his death as final manifestation of his divinity and a sign of the sacredness of life in the spirit and in the flesh.

It is important to keep in mind that whenever one studies the message of Jesus, he is describing the Kingdom of God and the ideal in human behavior. He depicts the ideal behavior towards which all

Christians must strive; but he clearly sets himself against the tendencies of the Pharisees, refusing to erect a new legalism based merely on external actions. His teaching represent ideal guidelines that the follower of Christ strives after. It is important to keep this concept in mind especially with regard to sexuality, if we are to avoid a strict legalism that governs every personal human act.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Our brief overview has uncovered that Israel was surrounded by neighbors who worshipped various fertility gods. These people believed that the cycles of nature (seasons) were controlled by the gods. The fertility gods were especially important because they were responsible for the fecundity of the crops. However, these gods could in turn be controlled by the actions of man. Because of these beliefs, emerged the fertility cults, temples and sacred prostitutes. If the fertility gods were pleased by the actions of man and would imitate the coital behavior between the sacred prostitutes and the worshippers a rich harvest would be ensured.

But Israel developed an understanding of God distinct from her neighbors. Their god had no consort and was not dependent on man nor on the cycles of nature. He was the only true God, all-powerful and master of history. Because of these beliefs, Israel developed an understanding of sex very distinct from her neighbors. There were no magical powers inherent in sex though its expression fulfilled a sacred, religious duty as well as a personal and social one. It was considered natural, wholesome and a gift from God. Yahweh had even chosen the circumcised male penis to symbolize his Covenant with Israel.

Jesus was born of this heritage. He had learned these things about his sexuality and came to accept and respect it. Whenever he was confronted with a difficult question concerning sexual behavior he applied the three basic principles of his ministry: integrity, individuality and law of love. Never did he regard sexuality as unwholesome or tainted with evil.

We now turn our attention to the early leaders of the Christian Church and see how they took the message of Jesus and applied it to their particular understanding of sexuality. The naturalism of the Jews, and especially that of Jesus, will be strongly modified by a dualistic understanding of human life. Greek philosophy, as we shall observe, penetrates the deepest beliefs of modern Christianity. In the area of human sexuality this fusion of Greek metaphysics into classic Christian beliefs results in significant historical alignments, and constitutes a pivotal force in the direction and substance of what we encompassingly refer to as "Christianity".

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION ON SEXUALITY

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Jesus continued, in the Jewish tradition, to preach that the material world was not to be despised or shunned, but rather to be appreciated, enjoyed, and lived fully (Jn. 2:1-11, Mk. 2:19). He reaffirmed the Genesis account that God created man, male and female and that "a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one flesh" (Mat. 19:5-6). Never did he regard women as inferior (his first manifestation as a risen person was to a woman, Mk. 16:9), nor the material world as evil (God's providence is abundant, Mat. 6:25-34), nor sex as sinful ("become one flesh," Mat. 19:6). On the contrary, Jesus brought a dimension, hitherto unheard of in Jewish circles: Creation would not be destroyed but rather brought to a fullness in the Resurrection of the spirit and of the body.

Within a century, Christians began to disagree, not so much with the message of Christ, but with the nature of Christ, of God, of creation, of sex. The responses to these disagreements gave birth to Christian theology. Though the Church condemned the first heresies: Gnosticism, Donatism, Manicheaism (which stated that the world was inherently evil and that Jesus never really took on human flesh) it fostered a negative attitude towards human sexuality. Geoffrey May summed up the situation thus: "Within a period of four centuries Christianity had exchanged its attitude of emotional expression to an attitude of emotional suppression. The virtues lauded by Gospel teachings were love and charity. The virtues lauded by patristic teachings were chastity and obedience" (1930, p. 28). However, the development of negative sexual attitudes was not exclusive to the first centuries of our Christian era, but rather has continued throughout the entire history of the Christian Church.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the historical emergence of the Christian sexual tradition from the time immediately following Jesus' death to the latest writings within the Catholic and Protestant churches. The various dates ascribed to each period were chosen by the author in view of the fact that every historian studied had given unique personal dates to each period.

This chapter will be divided into two general categories: Part I will cover the early centuries of the Church, from Paul to the Medieval Ages. The author has found it advantageous to subdivide Part I into three sections: Apostolic, Patristic, Pre-Scholastic or Dark Ages. (1) The Apostolic Age covers the first century of the Christian era and is dominated principally by the teaching of Paul. (2) The Patristic Age stretches from the first century to the eighth. Augustine is the dominant figure preceded by Justin Martyr, Tertulian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian of Carthage, Jerome, and John Chrysostom. These early theologians contributed significantly to the formation of sexual beliefs that now exists within the Christian Church. (3) The Pre-Scholastic Age or Dark Ages began after the final collapse of Rome and continued until the time of the new millennium. The theology of Augustine holds indisputable sway and his thoughts on sexuality manifest themselves through two significant movements: Monasticism and Penitentials.

Part II is also subdivided into three sections: Medieval Ages, Reformation Period, and the Modern Age. (1) The Medieval Ages cover the first five hundred years of our millennium. Thomas Aquinas dominates Christian theology and his views on sexuality, somewhat similar to Augustine's, became the official teaching of the Catholic Church. (2) The Reformation Period begins at the time of the early Renaissance around 1500; a time of great religious upheaval in the Christian Church. For the first time in over a thousand years Christian leaders, who are now married men, began to ask different questions about human sexuality, and conclude differently than their celibate counterparts. For our study the author has chosen to assess the writings of Luther and Calvin, believed to be the prominent figures of the Reformation. (3) Finally, we will look at our Modern Age of the past seventy years and briefly overview some current Protestant and Catholic trends in human sexuality.

PART I: THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION: FROM PAUL TO THE MEDIEVAL AGES

A. APOSTOLIC AGE (A.D. FIRST CENTURY)

Introduction

During the first century, Christianity remained steeped in the tradition of the Old Testament and in Jewish customs. Marriage was the accepted pattern of life, and celibacy and asceticism were practically non-existent. Sex was accepted as a wholesome part of life, to be enjoyed and used as a means to praise God who created man and woman to live as one. This is referred to as the naturalism of the Old Testament (Feucht, 1961). Within a very short period following the death of Christ, all this was to change. Husbands and wives would be encouraged to live as brothers and sisters, celibacy and virginity were to be extolled as superior to marriage, the body would become something to despise, and extraordinary methods would be devised to inflict self-punishment on one's body. This strange twist of attitudes will be the topic of the next chapter; our interest now lies in what took place.

There is one man who stands out above the rest representing the Christian era of the first century after Christ's death: Paul. Not only is Paul a Jew, but a Roman citizen as well, born in the Hellenistic city of Tarsus, and schooled in the philosophy of the Greeks. Paul is a world citizen, constantly on the move throughout the Mediterranean, and struggling with the emergence of a new world, and a new world religion.

Paul

We often hear that those who hold disparaging views on sex and marriage support their positions by quoting the Gospels of Christ and the Epistles of Paul (de Vinck, 1970). To understand Paul's position on human sexuality one must not only read his writings but also grasp the circumstances in which they took shape. Though Paul was a Jew believing in the naturalistic concept of life, he was also trained in Greek dualism. At the time of Paul, Greek thought had evolved into a dualism which viewed the material world as essentially evil and the human body as corrupt. Paul reveals in his writings his personal conflict between these two opposing views. His apparent inconsistencies are largely due to this inner conflict, which can be summed up in the following quote:

> And yet there is certainly a shift in emphasis as the Christian tradition passes from Jesus to Paul. Jesus' religion is Judaism of a high and noble kind, the consummation of all biblical relevation; Paul's is a Christ-centered mysticism, a religion of salvation conceived more specifically in terms of the current Hellenistic-Oriental quest for salvation from 'this present evil world', from a sin-infested realm of 'flesh', (if not from evil 'matter'), from the bondage to death and subservience to the elemental powers of the cosmos. (Grant, 1951, p. 160.)

Marriage Versus Celibacy

Paul never explicitly states that sex is evil, rather, he leaves us with apparent paradoxes and ambiguities. (1) On the one hand, he encourages the Christian not to marry and yet, if need be, to go ahead and marry (1 Cor. 7:8-9). (2) He counsels that it is best not to touch a woman, and yet advises against too long periods of continence (1 Cor. 7:1-7). These passages have been misinterpreted throughout Church history and misquoted in a condemnation of human sexuality and exaltation of celibacy above marriage. Many authors fail to place in proper context these sayings of Paul.

First of all, Paul is recommending celibacy as a more perfect way of life because of his eschatological view of the imminent arrival of the Lord. He counsels this way for two reasons: (1) "In view of the impending disaster," Paul sincerely believes that the end of the world and the final reign of Christ was imminent; therefore, it would be unwise to establish families and set up a home. (2) "I want you to be free of all anxieties." Paul asks: Should one become anxious and worry about providing for a family and a home when the Lord is coming? Time would be more properly spent if one prepared himself through prayer for the Lord's arrival. Secondly, Paul is being apocalyptic; believing that the world will shortly be destroyed. For Paul, time is growing short, it is a time of crises: "Those who have wives should live as though they had none," but he also continues to say, "those who mourn should live as though they had nothing to mourn for; those who are enjoying life should live as though there were nothing to laugh about; those whose life is buying things should live as though they had nothing of their own" (1 Cor. 7:29-31). What Paul is saying: because of the imminent disaster everything is turned upside down. During a time of crises, do not commit yourself to anything nor to anyone. This is hardly a sound foundation upon which to build a theology of sexuality which the Church has done throughout its history. In the most recent document from the Vatican on human sexuality (1976) Paul was quoted again: "Best to marry than to burn with passion."

Paul digresses from his Judaic background when he says: "Those who refrain from marriage will do better." As we have already seen, it was a disgrace for a Jew not to marry, for marriage was a natural state. Paul was either influenced by Hellenistic duality (cf. Chapter IV, Dualism) which urged the condemnation of the body or he was seeing the need for those who feel the call, to sublimate their sexual energy, channeling it by preparing for the Lord. In any case, we are not sure and neither is Paul for he states quite clearly: "I have no command of the Lord, but I merely give my opinion." This "opinion" has created great mischief in the Christian Church. These oft quoted, ambiguous statements of Paul, which were only of a personal opinion, and must be understood within an eschatological and apocalyptic framework contributed in an important way to the Christian Church's negative attitude towards human sexuality.

B. PATRISTIC AGE (A.D. 100-700)

Introduction

The development of Christian thought about God and the mystery of man's destiny as exemplified in the writings of the Fathers of the Church during the first seven centuries A.D. constitutes patristic theology (N.C.E., 1967). The writings of the Church Fathers left us with a rich heritage of a theology of God, but a very poor heritage of a theology of human nature especially in the realm of sexuality. From the death of the last Apostle, an apparent transformation of sexual attitudes began to take place; virginity and celibacy were perceived as superior to marriage; sexual union, even within marriage was often stigmatized as sinful; and sexual pleasure was to be avoided (Feucht, 1961). In this section we shall mention the most prominent Fathers of the Church and overview their teachings on human sexuality.

Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-166)

Justin, one of the earliest Christian writers, postulated a notion on sexuality that differed substantially from the Biblical concept. He asserts that Christians should remain virgins and celibates; but if they do marry, it should be only for the sake of procreation. If one must enter into a marriage contract then he should exercise as much self-control as possible in the area of sexual expression.

Tertullian (A.D. 150-230)

Tertullian was one of the most brilliant Christian writers of the second century and possessed a flair for prose which he used extensively in the defense of the Christian faith. In the area of sexuality he had some definite viewpoints that expressed hostility towards anything that had to do with sexual behavior. He possessed a particular hostility towards women:

> Do you not know that each one of you is an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours, lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert, that is, death, even the Son of God had to die. (PL, I, 1.)

Though Tertullian's interpretation of the Biblical story of Adam and Eve is refuted today, writings such as his planted the seed of negativism towards marriage, sex, and women. Tertullian also wrote:

> The Lord Himself said: 'Whoever has seen a woman with a view to concupiscence has already violated her in his heart.' But has he who has seen her with a view to marriage done less or more? . . . Accordingly, the best thing for a man is not to touch a woman; and accordingly the virgin's is the principal sanctity, because it is free from affinity with fornication. (ANF, IV, 55.)

It is interesting to note that Tertullian is addressing the former passage to his wife. Already we note that in the Post-Apostolic period marital intercourse, though not sinful in itself, is represented as "little more than a lawful substitute for fornication." Celibacy is considered the counsel of perfection, and marriage was but a secondary alternative to those who could not aspire to this ideal (James, 1952).

Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-216)

Clement often defends the sacrament of matrimony and praises it as instituted by God and sanctified by Christ. He describes matrimony as a sacred image of the love that exists between Christ and his Church. Nevertheless, he believes that women were inferior to men, and questions the purity of their nature.

Origen (A.D. 185-254)

Origen is viewed by many scholars as the greatest of all Hellenistic Christian theologians. Though he speaks eloquently on the nature of God and His creation, he utters some condemning words on human sexuality. He had a theory that all sex activity was inherently evil and was the origin of all actual sins (Niebuhr, 1942). It is often remarked that Origen castrated himself before being ordained because of his position on sex and his literal view of the Gospel passage in Mat. 19:12 (Messenger, 1956).

Cyprian of Carthage (A.D. 200-258)

Cyprian upheld the dignity of virginity when he wrote:

> Chastity is the dignity of the body, the ornament of morality, the sacredness of the sexes, the bond of modesty, the source of purity, the peacefulness of home, the crown of concord. . . What else is virginity then the glorious preparation for the future life? . . . Virginity is the continuance of infancy. Virginity is the triumph over pleasure. (ANF, V, 588, 589.)

Jerome (A.D. 331-420)

Jerome was one of the leading scriptural scholars of his time. He postulated that marriage cannot possibly be good since it renders prayer difficult, and points out that there may have been some saints among married people but that these have always kept a virginal life even within marriage. Jerome concludes, after quoting Paul, that it is good not to touch a woman for to touch a woman is bad because the contrary to good is bad (Messenger, 1956).

Summary

Patristic theology laid the foundation for a negative attitude in the Christian Church towards sexuality. Sex was not only viewed as a danger, but for some it was evil. The general thinking about marriage was that it was not sinful of itself, but should be relinquished for the more perfect state of life: namely, celibacy. These thoughts pervaded Christian doctrine at the time of two dominant men of patristic theology: John Chrysostom in the East, and Augustine in the West.

John Chrysostom (A.D. 345-407)

Chrysostom apparently modified the extremes expressed by earlier writers but nevertheless maintained that though marriage is an honorable state, virginity is superior; though established for procreation, since the Fall, its chief end is to be a remedy for concupiscence (Feucht, 1961). This was the first time when the expression 'remedy' was used with regards to marriage. Later on we will see that all the great theologians through the centuries have used this expression to denote one of the ends of marriage.

Augustine (A.D. 354-430)

Augustine is known as the greatest of all western patristic theologians. He laid the foundation of the classical Christian doctrine on sex and marriage that was later developed by Thomas Aquinas. Augustine was deeply concerned about human sexuality; possibly because it had been a troublesome area in his personal life. His thoughts are recorded in his Confessions that speak frankly of his sexual problems.

The relationship between his personal struggles and his writings on sexuality have been aptly analyzed by Bailey (1959). There are a number of reasons which one could postulate that led Augustine to formulate certain negative concepts on sex and marriage. First, his personal experiences in dealing with his own sexuality. Second, for nine years before his conversion to Christianity, he was a believer in Manichaeism, which professed that all flesh is evil. Third, after he left Manichaeism, Augustine turned to Neo-Platonism which taught that only the mind, reason, and soul were good and anything to do with our human body was tainted with evil. Augustine longed for a conversion which would deliver him from what he called "the degrading necessity of sex." This he claimed to have found in Christianity.

Augustine and Sin:

Augustine maintains that the first sin of humanity is pride. This he defines as: "a perverse desire of elevation, forsaking him to whom the soul ought solely to cleave as to its beginning, and the making of one's self the one beginning." Augustine then asked: "What was the consequence of this sin?" "Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths" (Gen. 3:7). He interprets this to mean that they were aware of a new impulse, independent of their minds and wills; a passion, a strong desire which Augustine called concupiscence. Man is now driven in all areas of power, wealth, prestige, sex, etc., by this insatiable desire. Concupiscence operates in all areas of life, but especially in the sexual. Man no longer has control over his sexual appetites and desires except by the grace of God. Augustine concludes that no sexual union can take place without concupiscence. Consequently, all children are born as the direct result of concupiscence and inherit both the reality and the guilt of this lust. All men are, therefore, conceived in sin not because they are human but because they have been polluted by an inordinate desire. It is for this reason Christ must have been born of a virgin because there was no concupiscence in his conception; consequently Christ was free from sin.

Augustine and Marriage:

Augustine views marriage as a creation of God, therefore, good. However, marriage is far from ideal because it is through marital intercourse that children are born in concupiscence. Nevertheless, the evil of concupiscence does not take away the good of marriage, but neither does marriage make a good of lust; however, God can extract a blessing out of the evil of concupiscence in the begetting of children.

The following is a quote from Augustine on his treatise on marriage and concupiscence:

> A man turns to use the evil of concupiscence, and is not overcome by it, when he bridles and restrains its rage, as it works in inordinate indecorous motions; and never relaxes his hold upon it except when intent upon offspring and then controls and applies it to the carnal generation of children. (Schaff, 1886-1890, I, 7.)

We will soon observe that Calvin and Luther apply similar logic to justify marital intercourse. It appears that Augustine is contradicting himself when he states that concupiscence is found in marriage and yet marriage itself is good. He attempts to clarify this contradiction in his treatise on virginity and pleasure.

Augustine and Virginity:

Augustine strongly believes that it is better to be a virgin or celibate than married. He believes that virginity is more pleasing to God because it demands more self-discipline. He believes that it would be better if Christians remained virgins and pagans have children; after all, children must still be "reborn in the Spirit" through baptism. Augustine also believed that progeny born in legal wedlock, be they Christians or pagans, are in the same condemnation as illegitimate sons and daughters because all have inherited concupiscence and the evil that accompanies it. Consequently, let the pagans beget children, and the Christians baptize them later on, while Christians live the "excellent way," refraining from all sexual activity. This is indeed a far cry from St. Paul who only suggests virginity, as an opinion, because of an apocalyptic view of "impending disaster" and to protect from "material anxieties."

Augustine sees all sexual desire as sinful and to be avoided if possible. His entire treatise on Holy Virginity demonstrates how virginity is better in God's eyes than marital intercourse, however holy and pure the latter may be. He nevertheless insists that the inner state of the virgin must be holy. He warns virgins to be on guard against pride, and insists that chastity is a pure gift from God; for lust is always present both in the married and in the virgin.

Augustine and Sexual Pleasures:

Any sexual pleasure outside of marriage is mortally sinful. If one has sexual intercourse within marriage for begetting children it is not sinful. If one has sexual intercourse for the sole purpose of having pleasure, as in the case of those beyond child bearing age, it is only venially sinful. No where does Augustine treat sexual pleasure as good unto itself either outside or within marriage.

Augustine demonstrates a tremendous fear of the pleasure that accompanies sexual behavior. He is quoted as saying: "I consider that nothing so casts down the manly mind from its heights as the fondling of women, and those bodily contacts which belong to the married state." For Augustine, the best form of marriage is a couple mutually taking a vow of celibacy and living as brother and sister. This is still practiced by some Christian couples and is recommended by some priests in the Catholic Church for those living in a union unsanctioned by the Church.

Paul never condemned the pleasures of sexual intercourse nor did he believe that the sexual acts within marriage should be limited to the sole purpose of begetting children. Augustine strayed considerably from the Biblical concept of marriage and sexuality. He was deeply influenced by the Hellenistic concept of duality and by the body-haters of Manichaeism.

Bailey (1959) concludes that Augustine's theory of human sexuality rests on no more substantial basis than his own speculated thinking and that he "must bear no small measure of responsibility for the insinuation into our culture of the idea, still widely current, that Christianity regards sexuality as something perculiarly tainted with evil" (p. 59).

C. EARLY MIDDLE AGES OR DARK AGES (A.D. 500-1000)

Introduction

The western world was in a period of confusion, collapse and transition when Augustine lay dying in 430; the entire Roman Empire was in its death throes. Vandals were in Rome pillaging its treasures and destroying the art and literature of the capital of Western civilization. During this eventful time in history two important movements contributed significantly to the Church's attitude towards sexuality: Monasticism and the Penitentials.

Monasticism

Around the year 285 a solitary man made his way along the banks of the Nile; Anthony, for various reasons, believed that he could serve God best by living a solitary life of penance and prayer. Twenty years later a number of men with the same intentions came to live with him. Monasticism had its beginnings. This movement is defined as an institution of ancient and medieval origins establishing and regulating the ascetical and social conditions, of the manner of religious life lived in common or in contemplative solitude (N.C.E., 1967).

The religious and social importance of this movement cannot be overstated. Monasticism became a significant life force of the Church and during the Medieval Ages influenced the intellectual, cultural, and religious centers of civilization. It was the monks who hand copied the few remaining classics, preserving them for future posterity. Popes and kings commissioned monks to teach intellectual history, and for many decades they were the protectors of it. Western civilization owes a great debt to those monastics who helped preserve not only the classic works of antiquity, but as well, the image of enlightened man as understood by the Greeks and Romans.

During the early Middle Ages monasticism grew rapidly from East to West. This was a time of great anxiety; people sought stability, peace, and a certain definition of who they were. They began to live in common, pooling their resources and constructing monasteries. The monks became models of ascetic living. They were celibates, obedient to their superiors and spent most of their time in prayer, work, and study.

As is the case with most movements, a time of decadence set in. Monks became noted for their feats of bodily punishment and competition broke out among various monasteries in masochistic rivalry. Monks went to extremes to abuse their bodies believing it was for the greater glory of God. Periodically these abuses were corrected by reformers but they always managed to return. Their attitude towards human sexuality was extremely negative. Important to keep in mind for our study is the fact that these celibate men became the leaders of the Christian Church. Many superiors of monasteries were consecrated Bishops and presided over the local Christian laymen. They brought with them their ascetic idealism, preaching that the body should be purged of sexual desires and subjugated to the will of God (which often meant the will of ecclesiastical superiors).

The most significant monastic movement relating to our area of study was that of Irish monasticism. Around the sixth century, St. Patrick preached Christianity to the pagan Celtics. The Irish character adapted quickly to St. Patrick's teachings on humility, poverty, and hardship. Monasteries soon flourished throughout Ireland so that by A.D. 600 the Church of Ireland had become the most monastic Church in Christendom. Bodily austerity was a feature of every Irish rule and became a national tradition. Because of the tribal organization of primitive Irish society, Ireland came to be ruled ecclesiastically from monasteries rather than from urban bishoprics (Neill and Schmandt, 1965). The Irish, noted for their curious intellectualism, great austerity, and missionary zeal, became a powerful influence within the Church. It was a quirk of history when the Irish, after a number of centuries, returned to the continent and began a reconversion of those who had fallen astray due in part to the barbarious invasions. The Celtic influence is still strongly felt in some of the Church's teachings, especially on sexuality. The Irish Church has always been noted for its extremely rigorous and conservative attitudes in the area of sexuality. This is noted in many dioceses of North America in which the Irish influence is felt.

Penitentials

Penitentials are manuals for confessors, setting forth allotments of penance for specified sins. They originated in the Celtic Church, became established in Ireland in the sixth century, and were introduced to the Franks and the Anglo-Saxons along with the Irish mission. Such manuals became necessary when private confession and penance, originally a monastic practice, began to replace the public confession and canonical penance of the early Church. Penances were graded according to the status of the sinner as well as to the nature of the sin. They had no authority other than their compiler's reputation for sanctity and holy wisdom (N.C.E., 1967). These Penitentials play a significant role in the lives of Christians throughout medieval history. Later they were transformed into ecclesiastical documents known as Canon Law. Until this decade, a form of Penitential was found in moral theology studied by most seminarians in the Catholic church (refer to Moral Theology by H. Jone and Handbook of Moral Theology by D. Prummer).

The Penitentials are important documents that reveal to the modern reader the conflict early Christians had in adopting their religious idealism, usually embodied in monasticism, with man's primitive brutality as he progresses towards a Christian moral culture. It is also important to note that many of the Christian's basic attitudes towards sexuality were developed within the context of the Penitentials and passed on through the Canon Law of the Church. Throughout the Penitentials there is a profound fear of sexual experiences. It is to be noted that the three greatest sins of early Christianity as noted by Origen and Tertullian were idolatry, fornication, and murder (McNeill and Gamer, 1938). The Penitentials are reminders of the parity in Christian thought of fornication with murder and idolatry. A few quotes from the Penitentials will demonstrate to what disfavor sexuality had fallen in those days.

In the Penitential of Finnian (c. 525-550) we read:

> We advise and exhort that there be continence in marriage, since marriage without continence is not lawful but sin and is permitted by the authority of God not for lust but for the sake of children. . . Married people, then, must mutually abstain during the three forty-day periods in each year, by consent for a time, that they may be able to have time for prayer for the salvation of their souls; and on

> Sunday night or Saturday night they shall mutually abstain, and after the wife has conceived he shall not have intercourse with her until she has borne her child. (McNeill and Gamer, 1938, p. 96.)

In the Penitential of St. Columbanus (591) we read: "Whoever has committed murder, that is, has killed his neighbour, let him do penance three years on bread and water" (Bieler, 1963, p. 103). The same penance applies to someone who begets a child through an adulterous relationship. Illicit sexual behavior was condemned by the Christians of this period.

In the most comprehensive of Irish Penitentials (Cummean, 662) we read about sexual desires:

> He who merely desires in his mind to commit but is not able, shall do penance for one year, especially in the three forty-day period. He who is polluted by an evil word or glance, yet did not wish to commit bodily fornication, shall do penance for twenty or forty days according to the nature of his sin. He who for a long time is lured by a thought to commit fornication, and resists the thought too half-heartedly, shall do penance for one or two or more days, according to the duration of the thought. (Bieler, 1963, p. 115.)

The "Old Irish Penitential" (eighth Century, Dublin) instructs the faithful layman in these terms:

> Anyone who lives in lawful wedlock, these are his rules of conduct: continence during the three Lents of the year, and on Fridays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, and between the two Christmases and between the two Easters, if he goes to the Sacrament on Christmas Day and Easter Day and Whitsun Day. Also they are bound to observe continence at the time of their wives monthly sickness, and at the time of pregnancy, and for thirty nights after the birth of a daughter, twenty nights after the birth of a son. (Bieler, 1963, p. 265.)

These examples indicate the punitive attitudes Christians were adopting toward their sexual nature. It is remote from the Jewish understanding of sexuality and the Gospel message that proclaimed the goodness of all created things and definitely does not reflect the way in which Jesus dealt with the adulterous woman.

Conclusion

The Penitentials do not represent a small segment of Christian history that was soon forgotten; rather, they represent a trend toward legalistic controls over human sexual behavior. Though they have undergone numerous adaptations they appear even to this day in various forms within the Christian Church.

Within the Catholic tradition there still exists the tendency to treat human sexual behavior along legalistic lines. There are some attempts, especially by the Protestant churches, to delve into the anthropological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of human sexuality. These trends are slow in developing because of the contrary tradition that has existed for so many years.

Leaving early Middle Ages, we enter a time of Renaissance when Medieval Christianity reached its peak between 1073 and 1274 in terms of institutional development, social impact, and depth of spirituality.

The Renaissance resulted in part from the momentum of the eleventh century reformation and from the general social stabilization witnessed throughout Europe. Monasticism expanded under the influence of Bernard of Clairvaux, Norbet, and Bruno. Dominic founded the great order of Dominicans while Francis of Assisi and his followers preached a message of "joie de vivre," detachment and love of the world and of God. A burst of intellectual activity resulted in the growth of institutions within which learning could flourish, the rediscovery of Aristotelian logic, and the creation of a new form of systematic study known as scholasticism. Among the intellectual giants of the time were Lombard, Abelard, and Albert the Great but none equaled the man who would lay the theological foundation still held today in Roman Catholicism: Thomas Aquinas. Before focusing on the writings of Aquinas, we shall briefly turn our attention to the sexual extremes of this period often highlighted in erotic mysticism.

PART II: THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION: FROM THE MEDIEVAL AGES TO CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

D. MEDIEVAL AGES (A.D. 1000-1500)

Introduction

By the beginning of the first millenium a clearly negative attitude in the Christian Church towards human sexuality was formed. Christians were told that celibacy was superior to marriage; that sexual abstinence was more virtuous than sexual love; that marriage's chief aim was procreation and a remedy for lust; and that concupiscence was the result of sin and always present in sexual intercourse.

The Medieval period saw celibate monks establish themselves in monasteries throughout Europe while similar institutions of common living took place in secular society. Feudal lords set up joint households in their castles with servants, chaplains, soldiers, and entertainers all living together with little privacy. A new type of sexual license developed, popularized by tales of the medieval knights. Crusades and various wars accelerated cultural exchange between East and West and contributed significantly to the ideals of chivalric and romantic love. Living in common, cultural exchange, and the ideals of romantic love had an impact on sexual behavior that lead to extremes of lasciviousness and erotic mysticism.

Sexual Extremes

The Medieval Ages presents a picture of sexual extremes. The pagan Goths and Celts were noted for their lasciviousness and their treatment of women as property. Pre-marital sex and sexual hospitality were the rules not the exception. Yet, at the same time, there developed what Bainton called "The Cult of Romantic or Courtly Love" (Truxal and Merrill, 1953). Love had to be an unending quest for the lady in waiting; marriage was the end of the quest; therefore, to be avoided. Bainton sums it up in these terms: "The conditions of courtly love are best realized if the lover address himself to a married woman of whom he has less than a claim and whom he cannot enjoy without stealth and adventure. Hence, courtly love became the cult of adultery" (Bainton, 1957, p. 60). In both cases, lasciviousness and romantic love contributed to a greater misunderstanding of marriage, the nature of women as persons, and sexuality in general.

Clerical Celibacy

During this time the Church became entrenched in its demand for clerical celibacy. Celibacy was officially established in the Church in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council and later at the Council of Trent, about 1570. But the primitive freshness of Christian chastity began to lose its charm. Men no longer revered in outstanding feats of bodily punishment and chastity because the spontaneous and voluntary character of early Christian asceticism was gone. When, in the ninth century, the Carlovingians attempted to enforce monastic and clerical celibacy, the result was an outburst of unchastity and crime: nunneries became brothels; nuns were frequently guilty of infanticide; monks committed fornication; the regular clergy formed incestuous relations (Lea, 1932). (For a more detailed description of these practices see Taylor's Sex in History, 1970.) The Church enacted reforms, especially in monastic orders, but many deviant practices continued well into the latter part of the Medieval Ages. Pascal, centuries later, summed up the reason for these perversions in these terms: "Qui veut faire l'ange, fait la bête". Whenever someone tries to play the role of an angel and suppresses his sexual instinct, a reaction occurs in which his "beastly" nature expresses itself.

Mystical Eroticism

William James defines mystical eroticism as an experience by which a person encounters God, bringing unification and serenity to that person. By this definition, numerous mystical experiences are recorded during this period. James is the first to acknowledge that many of these so-called "mystical experiences" have had an origin in feeblemindedness, neuroses or psychoses; called theopathic. James asks: How is one to separate the "sick" mystic from the genuine? James gives as an example St. Gertrude, a well-known Benedictine nun of the thirteenth century. Her "Relevations" consist mainly of proofs of Christ's partiality for her undeserving person:

> One day, at chapel, she heard supernaturally sung the words, 'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.' The Son of God leaning towards her like a sweet lover, and giving to her soul the softest kiss, said to her at the second Sanctus: 'In this Sanctus addressed to my person, receive with this kiss all the sanctity of my divinity and of my humanity, and let it be to thee a sufficient preparation for approaching the communion table.' (James, 1901/1974, p. 337.)

James sees this type of experience as superficial, lacking in "largesse" serving no end to anyone save in the indulgence of this particular woman in her need to be loved.

But mystics such as John of the Cross, Francis of Assisi, Theresa of Avila, were heroic persons, bent on reaching out not only to their God, but to their fellow man as well. Some of them were founders of religious orders and dedicated themselves to the illiterate, the poor, and the destitute. One should not be surprised at the erotic substance in their writings. The true mystics were first and foremost genuinely human persons and it was through their humanity that they encountered the divine.

Summary

Celibacy, erotic mysticism, lasciviousness, and romantic love all contributed significantly to a negative attitude towards human sexuality. This attitude continued for centuries until the Reformation when a more open and tolerant understanding of sex and marriage prevailed. But before we leave Medieval history, it is important to focus on one man who was to lay the foundation and the structure of the entire theological system of the Christian Church throughout Medieval days and which continues to dominate Roman Catholicism in our modern era.

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

No other theologian has incorporated the works of the past and laid the foundation of the future study in Christian doctrine as well as the one known as "Angelic Doctor": Thomas Aquinas. He applied the philosophical thought of Aristotle to the theology of Augustine, creating a synthesis that would lay the foundation of the theological system of Roman Catholicism. As Cole (1954) stated: "He acted out one of the most exciting events in intellectual history -- the administration of the Christian Sacraments to Aristotle, who was baptized a believer and married to Augustine" (p. 90). The main premise of Aquinas' ethical system is that man should live according to "right reason." Bodily impulses of themselves are not evil but must remain under the control of reason. However, to live under the direct control of bodily appetites or sensual impulses is considered evil.

Man possesses a natural faculty to help him recognize the difference between good and evil: synthesis. This synthesis is not sufficient to guide man; there is as well a need for conscience. Conscience is judging right from wrong in concrete situations. Aquinas states that conscience must be guided by natural law, which is the eternal law projected into the created world. It is that part of the divine law, discernable by human reason, without the help of revelation. Man is free to deny or to follow natural law. If he does not follow the dictates of his conscience, enlightened by natural law which necessarily follows divine law, then he sins. It is upon these premises that Aquinas builds his ethical principles on sex and marriage, and upon which the Catholic Church in its most recent declaration on human sexuality states: "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose on himself, but which holds him to obedience. . . . For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged" (Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics, 1976).

Sex is Good:

Aquinas states that sex is obviously a part of the divine purpose and, therefore, good. But Aquinas, in his analytical fashion, maintains it is merely a secondary good. Man is first ordered to the primary good which is the use of his reason, and then to a secondary good,use of bodily impulses. In this regard Aquinas adheres to Aristotelian philosophy. Sex is good but it must be kept in check by reason. While the Bible emphasizes knowledge to be the total body-spirit experience, Aristotle emphasized knowledge as the working of the intellect alone, i.e., pure thought. Aquinas states that in every instance reason should dominate man's actions. He states that before the Fall of Adam this was the case: "The second thing to be observed (as to coition) is a certain deformity of excessive concupiscence, which is the state of innocence (before the Fall) would not have existed, when the lower powers were entirely subject to reason" (Aquinas, I, II, Q. 98, a.2).

Sex as Pleasure :

Aquinas did not hold the same suspicion of sexual pleasure as Augustine. Nevertheless, he did declare extraneous pleasure, such as sensuality, hinders reason in three ways: by distracting reason through attention to bodily pleasure; by inclining us toward that which is contrary to reason; and by fettering the reason. The first two are morally sinful while the latter is not:

> In the case of conjugal intercourse, though the pleasure be in accord with reason, yet it hinders the use of reason, on account of the accompanying bodily change. But in this case the pleasure is not morally evil; as neither is sleep, whereby the reason is fettered, morally evil, if it be taken according to reason: for reason itself demands that the use of reason be interrupted at times. (Aquinas, I, II, Q. 34, a.l.)

Aquinas goes on to state that while pleasure was a part of God's purpose for sex in Paradise, it remains a part of his purpose for sex in sinful man as well. Finally, sexual pleasure can be either good or evil depending whether it follows the order of creation; that is, the order of man's right reason.

Marriage and Celibacy :

Aquinas is convinced that celibacy is part of the contemplative life, and marriage part of the active life. Celibate life focuses on the good of the soul and the things of God, while married life focuses on the good of the body and is committed to the propagation of the human race. Aquinas believes that married persons are devoted to ways of pleasing each other while the celibate is devoted to ways of pleasing God. Because of these reasons Aquinas concludes that celibacy, out of love for God, is superior.

Aquinas did not claim that virginity is the greatest of all virtues. Religious virtues are superior because they deal directly with contemplation while virginity or celibacy is only a means. A married person with an inner attitude of love is holier than a celibate who has none. The religious purpose of celibacy is to allow man to have more time for divine things.

Finally, Aquinas states that not everyone can follow the celibate way of perfection:

> The aforesaid counsels, considered in themselves, are expedient to all; but aiming to some people being ill-disposed, it happens that some of them are inexpedient, because their disposition is not inclined to such things. (Aquinas, II, II, Q. 154, a.4.)

Sex and Sin:

Aquinas defines sin as an inordinate act; a word, deed or desire contrary to the law of God. Sin is an act which ignores the order of nature. Lust is the sin of the flesh: "It consists in seeking venereal pleasure not in accordance with right reason" (Aquinas, II, II, Q. 154, a.1). Lust is manifested in inordinate acts and can be arranged in an hierarchical order. The worst sins are called "unnatural vices:" bestiality, sodomy, fellatio, cunnilingus, pederasty, and least among them, masturbation. After the "unnatural vices" come the sins of incest, rape of a wife, adultery, rape of a virgin, seduction of a virgin, and finally fornication, which is the least grave sexual sin. Aquinas finally concludes that all sins of a sexual nature are grave sins.

Sex Within Marriage:

Aquinas considers sexual intercourse within marriage either virtuous or sinful. Sexual intercourse is virtuous under two conditions: (1) when the parents desire to beget children for the worship of God; and (2) when one of the spouses "renders the debt" to the other, which is the virtue of justice. The latter is Aquinas' conception of marriage as a "remedy for sin" (Aquinas, III, Suppl. Q. 64, a.1). If a marriage partner is sexually aroused then it is the partner's duty to have intercourse so that the other one won't be tempted to commit fornication. He, in this viewpoint, reflects the "remedy for sin" of Paul, Augustine, and other religious thinkers.

Divorce and Engaged Couples:

It is interesting to note that Aquinas believed in premarital intercourse when the couple is formally pledged to each other in their hearts and have an inner intention for a true marriage, a lifetime bond. Aquinas concludes that they do not sin because, in fact, they are married, though not formally. He states that the act of sexual intercourse plus the internal commitment truly makes up the marriage ceremony even though the external witnesses are not present.

Aquinas believed that marriage is an indissoluble bond binding man and wife as long as both shall live; therefore, divorce is sinful. Aquinas states: "the dictate of the natural law requires them . . . to live together for ever, inseparable" (Aquinas, III, Suppl. Q. 67, a.1).

Conclusion

Aquinas, like Augustine and Paul, had a strong suspicion of sex. Paul was concerned that marriage would distract us from the Word of God. Augustine was fearful that the sexual impulses would overcome our will to do good and lead us into sin. Aquinas believed that the primary good of man was the use of his reason while the use of his bodily appetites was secondary. Though Aquinas did not fear sexual pleasure, he did warn about its distraction from the use of reason and its interference with the contemplative life.

All three men exhibited considerable male chauvinism and demonstrated a general fear of women. They warned man of the passions involved in sex and believed sincerely that if man can abstain, then he should. None of them ever emphasized the beauty of sex and its potential for praising God. Centuries later, religious leaders would contend the position adopted by these great men, struggling to discover a new outlook on human sexuality. This will take us to a new period in Church history known as the Reformation. Men such as Luther and Calvin will challenge the traditional stand of the Church not only in faith and morals but in its understanding of sexuality.

E. REFORMATION PERIOD (1500-1900)

Introduction

Our task is not to delve into the reasons for the Protestant Reformation nor to analyze the Catholic reaction to this movement. The intent here is to assess what religious men of the times had to say about sexuality. To understand sexual attitudes during the Protestant Reformation we must first analyze the teachings of the Reformers because this was a time of major breakthroughs among Christian leaders in the theory of sex and marriage. These men were not celibates, and their views on sexuality differed radically from those of their celibate counterparts. Most religious historians would agree that Martin Luther and John Calvin stand out as the Fathers of the Protestant Reformation; thus, we shall specify some of their viewpoints concerning sexuality and marriage.

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Luther stands at the threshold of a great religious movement.

He is a man of transition, of two different worlds of conflict. His writings convey a mixture of radical and conservative thinking. On one hand, he eulogizes marriage as heavenly and spiritual, while at the same time he describes it as a "remedy for sin" and an antidote to the incontinence that troubles all men.

Sex and Sin:

Luther believed that man is "totally depraved," corrupt in mind, soul, body and will, rather than simply deprived of supernatural gifts, and weakened somewhat in will, as the Catholics professed. He insisted that man is not ultimately justified by his own good works, but only by the grace of God and man's faith in Him. No part of man escapes the corruption of original sin.

Luther insisted that our sexual desires have been tainted by original sin; nevertheless, man is a being which needs to express sexual desires. Contrary to the institutional Church he believed that few men could abstain from sexual expression. He believed that even though our sexual nature is tainted by sin we must express ourselves sexually and trust in the healing grace of God.

Marriage and Celibacy:

Luther agrees that there are some who remain celibate for the sake of the Kingdom, but they are "so rare that among a thousand men there is scarcely to be found one; for, they are a special miracle of God's own" (Luther, 1540/1903, p. 279). Luther does not reject celibacy as a lifestyle for those who choose it; however, he rejects the mandatory celibacy imposed upon the Church's clerics. Though he does not consider celibacy superior to marriage, he did state at one time, that celibacy is better, not because sex is evil, but because the marriage state is filled with cares; and one can better please God if he is free from these cares (Cole, 1954). In this regard his views parallel those of Aquinas. But in other moods Luther exclaims: "Whoever does not marry must misconduct himself." Writing to a friend concerning marriage, Luther states: "Your body demands and needs it; God wills it and insists upon it" (Luther, 1540/1903, p. 276). Religious historians claim that Luther had serious personal problems with "shameful temptations," and like Augustine, resolved them in part, through marriage. Crucial to the history of Christian thought is the fact that Luther broke through the long Roman tradition of clerical celibacy, even though he did not break through the tradition of dark suspicion towards sexual expression, even within marriage.

Sex and Marriage:

Though Luther believed that God created male and female for each other he was skeptical about the goodness of marriage. He saw marriage as a "remedy" for a lesser evil -- sex outside of marriage. He states: "Before marriage we are on fire and rave after a woman" (Luther, 1540/1903, p. 196). At another time he would say: "The marriage duty is not performed without sin, and yet because of its necessity God winks at it" (Luther, 1541/1915, p. 17). Luther seems to say that marriage is the remedy for lust; yet, lust is such that there is no true remedy. Though Luther enters into a marriage of his own and believes in the divine decree that almost all should marry, he likewise believes that sex is unclean and exists as an unfortunate necessity. He states that: "No conjugal duty can be performed without sin, though God by his mercy overlooks it" (Luther, 1540/1903, p. 511). In this regard Luther was not only a product of his own generation, but as well influenced the thought of future generations. As a seminal thinker in Protestant theology his views carried weight within the official Church as well as among the faithful followers.

Sex and Realism

Though Luther finds it difficult to separate himself from the negative attitudes towards human sexuality within the Christian tradition, he, nevertheless, brings a certain realism to the subject. He states clearly that all men possess strong libidinal drives that must find expression. He believed that sexual thoughts and fantasies are common to all men and that one does not become unchaste because of them. He somewhat anticipated Freud on this topic, but where Freud looks upon the instincts as natural, Luther considers them the impure result of sin (Cole, 1954).

Summary

The following ideas of Luther influenced the Christian understanding of human sexuality: Luther is convinced of the irresistable urges of our sexual nature, and to legislate men to contain themselves is unjust. He no longer sees marriage as a sacrament but rather the consenting of two persons under the protection of the state. He counsels monogomous marriages but allows divorce and remarriages and even bigamy because of his belief that man needs an outlet for sexual passion. Though he has a more realistic view of sex than his Catholic counterpart, he does not see it as good. Sex remains only lust for Luther, a raging energy that must be allowed expression. Marriage is a remedy for this lust; but, "lust is the only thing that cannot be cured by any remedy, not even by marriage which was expressly ordained for this infinity of our nature. For the greater part of married persons still live in adultery " (Luther, 1541/1915, p. 18).

Celibacy can be good but few receive the grace to live that life. It is a very special gift from God.

The Father of Protestantism broke many bonds of medieval Christianity in the area of sexual attitudes. He brought a fresh realism to sexuality; but he could not change the fundamental attitudes of his contemporaries, nor of himself. Sex was still a powerful, daemonic force ready to engulf those who give it free reign.

John Calvin

Calvin was a French theologian who contributed significantly to the Protestant Reformation. His theology is similar to Luther's, with difference in emphasis. While Luther's response to God is love, Calvin's response is obedience. From the notion of obedience there developed within the Calvinistic Church a strict, moral code. (Puritanism later finds its roots in Calvin's strict moral theology.) While Luther saw little sense in controlling sexual desires since they are irresistible, Calvin believed that man must bring "delicacy and propriety" to the sexual act. Calvin was of a different temperament than Luther, and likewise concluded differently on this topic.

Sex and Marriage:

Calvin believed that sex within marriage is good because God had created it and ordained it so. Its primary end is the begetting of children, and promoting companionship between spouses. Calvin was earnest in stating that women are not primarily sexual beings created merely to satisfy the sexual drives of man, but are first and foremost social beings. Sex is to be enjoyed for itself because it is pure and good. However, there is a tinge of suspicion when Calvin speaks in these terms:

> You may take it thus briefly, conjugal intercourse is a thing that is pure, honorable and holy, because it is a precise institution of God; the immoderate degree with which persons burn is a fault arising from the corruption of nature; but in the case of believers marriage is a veil, by which the fault is covered over so that it no longer appears in the sight of God. (Calvin, 1546/1948, p. 1.)

Calvin believed two extremes were to be avoided: to reject sex and seek celibacy; and, to regard sex as self-justifying allowing married couples to indulge in whatever sexual form they so desired.

Celibacy:

Calvin states that celibacy is better than marriage because the unmarried have greater freedom to serve God; but he did also state that there should be no celibate obligations imposed upon clerical men and that all should be free to marry, for as Paul said: "Better to marry than to burn with passion."

Pleasure and Sex:

Calvin fears the intense pleasure accompanying sexual experience (a fear shared by virtually every great churchman since Paul) and insists that sexual conduct must be governed by moderation and propriety. His comment on the passage in Deuteronomy, where it is stated that a newly wed man is exempt from military service for one year to remain home and cheer his wife, is:

> That God should permit a bride to enjoy herself with her husband affords no trifling proof of his indulgence. Assuredly, it cannot be but that the lust of flesh must affect the connection of the husband and wife with some amount of sin; yet God not only pardons it, but covers it with the veil of holy matrimony . . . nay, He spontaneously permits them to enjoy themselves. (Calvin, 1550/1950, p. 2.)

Summary

Calvin, though he envisioned sex and marriage as holy and pure, had to cover it with "the veil of holy matrimony" as Luther had to have "God wink at it." The pleasures of sex cannot be accepted on their own and must be condoned by God. The negative attitudes towards sexuality accumulated over the centuries are deeply embedded in the thought of these Reformers. One will have to wait three centuries before the Age of Science adds new light to the darkness that envelops men's minds around this issue. But, before we examine our contemporary scene, we will briefly view the Catholic stand taken on sex and marriage during the Council of Trent.

Council of Trent (1545-1563)

In reaction to the Protestant Reformation, representatives of Roman Catholicism gathered together periodically for eighteen years in the city of Trent to determine moral doctrine. These documents were later written in catechetical form and used throughout the Catholic world until the Council of Vatican II (1962). The Council of Trent decreed the following statements relevant to sex and marriage:

1. Man is not a "depraved" being but is born with original sin. Though he is baptized, concupiscence remains as an incentive to sin.

2. Marriage is indissoluble.
3. Priestly celibacy must be strictly enforced.
4. Celibacy is superior to marriage.
5. Divorce is not permitted on any grounds.
6. Marriage is defined as a sacrament instituted by Christ.
7. The primary end of marriage is procreation; secondarily mutual support and companionship; and finally, a remedy for immorality.
8. Marital intercourse should always be performed with moderation; and couples should abstain three days before Holy Communion and most of the time during Lent.

Conclusion

In Roman Catholicism, legalism was firmly entrenched. Sexual behavior was now controlled by a highly complex juridical system. There was a rule for every sexual activity with its accompanying virtue or sin. Rome had spoken on the matter and there was no further need to explore the nature of human sexuality. Protestantism was struggling more intensely with the issues but could not completely extricate itself from negative attitudes inherited from the past. It will take a New Age of thinking in the fields of biology, anthropology, psychology, and sociology to modify the assumptions of Christian thinking and present a new image of man's sexual nature.

F. MODERN AGE (A.D. 1900-)

Introduction

The period following the Reformation (16th to 19th century) was one of orthodoxy. The Catholic church maintained its firm position taken at Trent while Protestants formulated various systems agreeing in most part on sexual matters. Owing to a similar heritage, both Catholics and Protestants were saying much the same thing. Troeltsch (1949) referring to Protestantism, stated that sexual sins were frankly faced, classified, and analyzed after the pattern of scholastic theology, with traces of Aristotelian philosophy apparent. Fundamentally these Protestant writings followed Catholic tradition and held to many medieval concepts, terms, classifications, and minute distinctions. Within the Protestant movement there were extremes such as Puritanism and Pietism, and within Catholic tradition, Jansenism. These extremes warned man about the inherent sinfulness of sex and attempts to curb sexual expression. But generally speaking, we can assume that no new development took place during this period. (For a more complete overview of the various orthodox writers of this period, see Feucht, 1961.)

Contemporary Protestantism

Since the turn of the 20th century and the advent of Freudian psychology, a new outlook on sexuality has profoundly influenced Christian writers. The material dealing with sex and marriage within the Christian tradition is overwhelming, and it is difficult to present a clear, unbiased picture of what is being said by Protestant Christianity in this area. This section will treat some of the men whom I believe best represent Protestant positions in this field.

One significant trend in contemporary Protestantism advocates a certain "Christian naturalism." Science has brought to light a new definition of man and the Christian is attempting to line up this new definition with his own. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, a British pastoral psychologist, known for his book The Mastery of Sex Through Psychology and Religion (1932), has attempted to analyze the new Christian definition of man. He presents insights derived from psychology and his interpretation of religion insists that all truth is one and that no contradiction should exist between good psychology and good theology.

Weatherhead begins by postulating that sex is inherently good. He states that man, because he has no longer an urgent need of procreation for the good of society, has a surplus of libidinal energy. This energy must be sublimated through what he calls "mastery of sex." He points out that sexual intercourse is the deepest level of self-giving, involving the entire personality. He states that the repression of sexual drives is harmful; while suppression, being conscious and deliberate, can be a sign of mental health.

Weatherhead points out that sexual intercourse should only occur between two persons who have given themselves in marriage. He favors birth control because he believes that the primary end of marriage is mutual love -- not procreation. He refutes the belief that masturbation is a sin and finds no wrong in the act itself except that it conjures in the mind of the person lewd mental pictures making self-control and sex adjustment harder to achieve. (In this regard we note a trend unique to 20th century thought: the rightness or wrongness of a moral act is determined as much by its consequence as by its nature. This type of pragmatism was unthinkable during the Middle Ages.) Weatherhead urges everyone to accept himself as a sexual being, making no attempt to ignore or evade his libidinal drives (Cole, 1954).

Weatherhead represents many liberal Protestants who have drawn heavily on "Christian naturalism." At times he is quite simplistic in outlook and somewhat sentimental; nevertheless, his work represents an important step in the breaking of established tradition.

New Biblical Interpretations

Some Protestant theologians are skeptical of the liberal view of some psychologists. They prefer a return to the Biblical understanding of man and interpret sexuality in the light of contemporary experiences. Otto Piper has this to say about returning to the Bible:

> Not because we want to know what was thought about sex in Palestine nineteen hundred or three thousand years ago, but because the Bible offers us the only satisfactory ontology of sex, i.e., an interpretation of its nature, which in all respect is in harmony with the facts of experience. (Piper, 1941, p. 27.)

Piper suggests five principles fundamental to a Biblical interpretation of sex:

1. In sexual intercourse two persons of different sex become joined in an indissoluble unity. This is based on Genesis 2:24.
2. Sex is meaningful in itself, creating a specific kind of personal relationship.
3. Through a sexual experience we gain knowledge of the "secret" of our own sexuality. This is Piper's main point; knowledge of self through sex. Therefore the first sexual intercourse is of prime importance and according to Piper, forms a marriage bond.
4. In love sustained by faith sex attains its consummation and perfection.
5. Sex life is necessary and good, but not absolutely essential for a full human life.

Piper explains the nature of sin as a dark, unconscious power within us that has effected our nature. Sex is not excluded, therefore we must have faith in the forgiving grace of God. Piper sees sex as a good and necessary part of man's nature not overlooking the fact that man must continue to struggle for integrity with the help of God (Cole, 1954).

Emil Brunner is considered one of the leading Protestant theologians of our century. He bases his ethical system on the order of creation. The order of creation with regards to sex is:

1. The trinitarian relationship of man-woman-child. He advocates strongly that the unity of family is ordained by God. Every individual comes from the unity of two unique individuals. This bond will never be broken and cannot be denied. It is an existential fact.
2. The fact of human sexual love. "Where the emotion of love is genuine and strong; who love each other know that this bond is permanent" (Brunner, 1937, p. 347). He doesn't deny that the impulse to seek variety is there but that it is a result of love's weakness and not strength.

He denies that marriage should be based solely on love, but rather on fidelity in love because love is selfish and seeks to possess the beloved. He speaks of marriage as personal, with sexual intercourse as the height of this personal relationship. However, Brunner has a caution for this union; for whatever union is achieved, it is always partial and transitory.

Brunner concludes that we must seek a middle-way between uncontrolled self-expression and celibacy. The middle-way is monogamous marriage; that is, a certain tempering of the erotic impulse.

Concerning divorce, Brunner sets himself against legalism. Divorce is a sign of failure of the marital commitment; nevertheless, it must be understood because we are dealing with sinners who stand in need of love and of grace.

William Cole, in his two books on sex, Sex and Love in the Bible and Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis, concludes that Christians should return to the naturalism of Biblical man. He points out that Christianity in its original message is not anti-sexual, but rather naturalistic and pro-sexual. The task of contemporary Christianity is to re-examine the three classical doctrines of Christianity: creation, original sin, and redemption. Cole believes that once this is done we can attempt to re-interpret sexuality in the light of the Gospel as applied to our contemporary society.

A number of Protestant denominations have given "official" statements on sexuality: the British Council of Churches issued a report "Sex and Morality" in 1966; the Quakers offered in 1963 their contribution towards a Quaker view of sex; and the Lutheran Church Missouri Senate offered a research in this area entitled "Sex and the Church" (1961). Other Church statements and numerous authors have contributed within the Protestant framework. Those cited above give us a general sense of the direction Protestantism is going. But what is Roman Catholicism saying during the twentieth century? In which direction is it going? Will it continue to enforce the laws governing sexual behavior that it set down four hundred years ago at the Council of Trent? Will human sexuality be treated within a legalistic system? To answer these questions, we now turn our attention towards contemporary Roman Catholicism.

Contemporary Catholicism

Modern man is perplexed, angry, astonished, relieved and sometimes amused by what he hears pronounced by the Pope on sexual matters. Catholics, in general, were shocked when they heard in 1968 that the use of artificial contraceptives is immoral. They seem amazed at the most recent document (1976) coming from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, endorsed by the Pope, stating that homosexual acts as well as masturbation are intrinsically disordered acts, and that pre-marital sex is immoral. The official Catholic teaching on sexual matters has not noticeably changed its position on major issues since its formulation at the Council of Trent (1545). Roman Catholicism still maintains, though with some ambiguity, that the primary end of marriage is procreation and that every act of intercourse must be open to new life; marriage is an indissoluble bond and divorce is immoral; and priestly celibacy must be enforced.

Roman Catholicism has been noted historically for its slow decisions in matters of doctrine and morals; however, countless contemporary Catholics no longer hold the same views on sexuality as those of the official Vatican pronouncements. Because of this divergence the present section will be divided into two categories: "Ecclesiastical Pronouncements" and "What Some Catholics are Saying."

Ecclesiastical Pronouncements

The Catholic Church often makes official pronouncements through Ecumenical Councils such as Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II, but also in a less official manner through encyclical letters written by the Pope himself addressed to the faithful. Since the Council of Trent there have been at least three encyclical letters that speak directly to marriage and human sexuality. A brief synopsis of each follows.

Encyclical Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae 1880 by Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903)

The Pope repeated the teaching of the Council of Trent on the Sacrament of matrimony. He stressed the fact that the marriage contract and the sacrament itself cannot be separated (Clarkson, et al., 1955).

Encyclical Casti Connubi 1930 by Pope Pius XI (1922-1939)

The Pope stressed the nature of the Sacrament of matrimony, and pointed out the fact that the primary purpose of the contract will always be the procreation of children, and under no circumstances should the primary end be made subordinate to other good but secondary purposes, namely sexual love (Clarkson, et al., 1955).

Encyclical Humanae Vitae 1968 by Pope Paul VI (1963-   )

The Pope stressed that the teaching on marriage is founded on natural law illuminated by divine Revelation. This natural law dictates that artificial birth control, except for the natural "rhythm manner," is contrary to natural law; therefore, immoral. Direct abortion and sterilization, for any reason, is condemned. The Pope then reiterated the traditional Church position about the ends of marriage; the primary function being procreation and the secondary, unitive. He then repeated that marriage is an indissoluble sacrament and that a couple must build their marriage on love and fidelity.

Moral Theology

These Papal Pronouncements found expression in the moral handbooks of priests and seminarians preparing for the priesthood. Still used today, but much less frequently are: Moral Theology by H. Jone (1929) and Handbook of Moral Theology by D. Prummer (1921). These moral textbooks deal with sexual sin. Jone has had at least seventeen editions and was faithfully followed by most North American clergy both in the confessional and sermons delivered on sexuality. In both of these moral books masturbation is unequivocally condemned; tongue-kissing is sinful; looking at one's "private parts" out of curiosity is venially sinful, etc. One quote will be sufficient to give the reader an idea of the attitude prevailing in such books:

> To look at the private parts of a person of the opposite sex is gravely sinful, unless done unexpectedly or superficially or momentarily or from a distance. But if young artists in their training are compelled to attend art academies they do not sin by sketching such models. They must, however, not consent to any sexual commotion that may arise and must try to render the danger remote by prayer and renewal of their good intention. (Jone, 1929/1961, p. 156.)

The attitude of sexual suspicion, legalism and guilt was fostered by most priests and nuns during the first half of this century. A strange phenomenon called "scrupulosity" developed in which laymen began to believe that they were constantly in a state of sin because of their sexual desires, thoughts, and actions.

Vatican II, Ecumenical Council

The official "ex cathedra" statements of the Church are found not in Encyclicals, but in Ecumenical Councils when Bishops throughout the world gather together to study matters of moral and doctrine. Such a Council took place between 1963 and 1965. Over two thousand Bishops from around the world gathered in Rome to focus on ways to update the Church. Pope John XXIII had asked beforehand for topics to discuss before the Council. In the area of sexuality three topics were most frequently brought to attention:

1. Birth control and its legitimate use.
2. Priestly celibacy and its eventual abrogation.
3. Status of divorced Catholics who remarry.

Prior to the Council, a Vatican Committee evaluated various issues to be discussed during the Council. Each of the above named topics was vetoed and never brought before the Council (Pohier, 1974). Some concluded that the Vatican hierarchy did not want to discuss these issues because of their delicate nature. Nevertheless, other delicate issues were discussed in the open atmosphere of the Council. Most authors conclude that the Vatican hierarchy was simply unwilling to change its position on sexual matters. However, since Vatican II, each of these issues was eventually taken up and the old stance on birth control, priestly celibacy, and divorce was reiterated and maintained.

The Council of Vatican II did speak about conjugal love in one of its documents on "The Church Today." It spoke of conjugal love as "eminently human," "merging the human with the divine" (Abbot, 1966, p. 252). "This love (explains the Council) is uniquely expressed and perfected through the marital act. The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastily are noble and worthy ones" (Abbot, 1966, p. 253). The Council then addressed itself to the question of the ends of marriage. The Council, though seemingly leaving the question open in spirit, states that the true end of sexual intercourse is procreation:

> Hence, while not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account, the true practice

> of conjugal love, and the whole meaning of family life which results from it, have this aim; that the couple be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will enlarge and enrich His own family day by day. (Abbot, 1966, p. 254.)

In summary, we see that Vatican II has added nothing to the Council of Trent in its position on sexual behavior, but it speaks in a more understanding way adding greater depth to the meaning of conjugal love. We now turn our attention to some Catholic viewpoints which do not reflect the hierarchical position within Roman Catholicism. These viewpoints have contributed significantly to the development of sexual understanding within the Catholic tradition.

What Some Catholics are Saying

In the past three or four decades there is a growing awareness among Catholics of an appreciation of the value of man as man. Christian humanists such as Marcel, Bergson, and Mounier have contributed to a more positive attitude towards the humanity of man. In 1925 Von Hildebrand lectured on the relation between intercourse and love and, "for the first time, a Catholic writer taught that love was a requirement of lawful, marital coition" (Manning, 1972). Later, H. Doms expanded the insights of Von Hildebrand, and stated that marital intercourse itself is a means to the achievement of holiness. Noonan (1965) stated that the "extrinsicist" view of the value of love, and even of sexual pleasure, should be set aside. The pleasure experienced in intercourse is not merely present as a bait to action, but reflects the profound ontological meaning of conjugal intimacy.

Messenger (1956) asserts that an important place should be allotted to passion and pleasure in the sex act. The British Catholic psychiatrist Jack Dominian (1967) has written numerous books in the area of sexuality. He asserts that we must accept wholeheartedly our bodies and enjoy the use of them. (The Christian does not shun what God has created.) Marc Oraison, another psychiatrist, praises human sexuality as a gift from God and emphasizes that sexuality is not localized only in the genitals but is expressed through our entire maleness or femaleness. Janniere (1964) stresses the phenomenological aspect of human sexuality, and views it as an important dimension of our being-in-the-world and our being-for-the-other. Eugene Kennedy (1972), a priest psychologist, has written numerous articles and books on the role of sexual intimacy in fostering human love. Pfuertner (1972), Dominican priest moralist, adopts a radical new approach to sexual morality by shifting Catholic sexual morality from an ethics of law to an ethics of personal and social responsibility. Other authors such as Bird (1967) and de Vinck (1970) address human sexuality in a more existential way, presenting to the reader ways of experiencing a richer sexual life.

Conclusion

Many Catholics find themselves in a dilemma. They are taught, on one hand, the official pronouncements of Rome on the traditional teachings of Christian morality while, on the other, they hear new radical thoughts by Catholic theologians that differ considerably from Rome's position.

Baum (1973) believes that this dilemma is particularly pronounced in the area of sexual ethics. He traces its origin to the

Vatican's pronouncement on birth control (1968). Because of wide public dissent, Catholic theologians received a new sense of freedom to pursue other alternatives. The lay Catholic was forced not only to question the Church's teaching on sexual ethics but the role of authority in this teaching. Many Catholics could not reconcile this living experience with the teaching of Rome. Consequently, many Catholics while still remaining in the Church, practised a belief contrary to official Vatican teaching. Many switched from an ethic of law to an ethic of responsibility based on personal and social values.

An ethic of responsibility (sexuality in terms of values and their interaction) does not advocate an existential or situationist approach that tries to solve all moral questions simply in terms of love. It places moral responsibility on the individual to weigh the interrelation of personal and social values. Though it advocates greater sexual freedom, its demands are greater than the traditional stand.

Numerous Catholics accept an ethic of responsibility and remain in the Church while others leave the Catholic Church because they believe it does not serve a relevant purpose to their life. Others refuse to consider alternatives to the ethics of law and became staunch supporters of every pronouncement from Rome. Whatever decision Catholics are making, one thing is certain: Catholics no longer believe that throughout their Church unanimous agreement exists on ethical standards.

The dilemma is forcing Catholics to consider alternatives that engender a wider understanding of human sexuality. The faithful complacency of most Catholics has been shattered forcing them to come to grips with their sexual nature within the context of contemporary society.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Though at times the institutional Church, Catholic and Protestant, appears not to meet the challenge of our Modern Age, individual Christians are struggling to understand the Gospel message in view of recent discoveries. Many of them are scientists who profoundly believe that their faith gives meaning and depth to their discoveries. They are the ones who bring new insights to the institutional Church in the hope that it will adapt their insights to enrichen the lives of others. Though they might not speak in the name of the institutional Church, they represent the deepest meaning of Church: "The Community of Believers".

These people are attempting to grow beyond the anti-sexual attitudes of the Apostolic and Patristic Ages, the sexual fears of the Dark Ages, the sexual legalism of the Medieval Ages, and the sexual ambiguities of the Reformation Period. Many of them are challenged by the words of Dr. Dominian:

> The time is long overdue for Christianity to take the initiative in this area. A faith committed to an understanding and realization of love cannot leave sexuality out of its recogning to the tender mercy of others. Christianity needs to affirm afresh the positive significance of sexuality and the realization of such a goal is perfectly consistent with the Good News. It needs to define afresh the meaning of human relationships in contemporary terms, using the knowledge from the sciences of psychology, sociology, anthropology and biology, and to integrate the findings in the service of the Christian commandments which insist on loving God, our neighbour and ourselves. (1970, p. 1023.)

CHAPTER IV

PSYCHO-HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: SECTION I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Jewish heritage viewed sexuality as natural, wholesome, and deeply linked with the religious lives of men and women. Israel's understanding of sexuality contrasted sharply with those of her neighbors whose fertility cults detached sexuality from personality, and treated it as a symbol of nature. The Israelites understood sexuality within a personal and social context and any condemnation of sexual aberrations was due, not to their belief that sex is innately evil, but rather to abuses, reflecting a sin of another nature such as injustice, worshipping idols, or lack of hospitality.

Jesus grew out of this Jewish heritage and never condemned human sexuality as innately evil. He reaffirmed the Genesis account: "It is not good that man should be alone" but rather, "the two become one body." In addition to the Jewish laws He challenged man to an ideal of human sexual behavior, i.e. inner integrity; man must be true to himself, his actions must follow his deepest convictions. As for man in the flesh, He claimed that there would be a Resurrection not only of his spirit but his flesh as well. Whenever he condemned sexual aberrations, He did so with understanding and forgiveness, not because man's sexual nature was depraved but because his actions violated the law of love towards his neighbor.

In the previous chapter we overviewed the historical development of sexual attitudes within the Christian tradition. In a very short period following the death of Christ institutionalized Christianity developed a negative attitude towards the human body, particularly its sexual nature. The Church transformed its Jewish heritage and the message of its founder on sexuality from an appreciation of its wholesomeness and value to a disparaging view of its worth in human life. Sex was regarded by some as an evil, sexual desire and pleasure as sinful. Intercourse was considered only a legitimate means for fornication, a remedy for concupiscence and lastly, a necessity for procreation. Husbands and wives were encouraged to live as brothers and sisters while celibacy and virginity were extolled as superior to marriage. The human body became an object to discipline and at times to despise.

Because of these attitudes the Church initiated a code of ethics and a legal system that controlled most aspects of sexual behavior. The Penitentials were the first widely used moral guidelines stating clearly which sexual practices were permitted or condemned by the Church. We have noted that a more balanced approach was offered by Aquinas and a more realistic approach by the Protestant Reformers, Luther and Calvin. Nevertheless, modern Christians remain influenced by a lingering negative attitude within their tradition. The Christian still carries, in part, a suspicion of sex and for the Catholic, in particular, a legal system still evaluates his sexual behavior.

Only recently, scholars are discovering that sexual negativism does not originate from the message of the founder of Christianity nor from the Jewish'understanding of Biblical man but rather from outside forces, particularily alien philosophies, faulty exegetical studies, cultural impositions, and biological and psychological misconceptions. The rest of this study will deal with these outside forces and will attempt to interpret the sources of influence that are at the root of Christian sexual negativism.

The general purpose of this chapter is to focus on two basic areas that contributed significantly to the development of sexual negativism. Part I delves into the prevailing dualistic trends during early Christianity. In particular, specific emphasis will be given to Plato and his philosophy, and the religious dualism called Manichaeism. Both had a significant influence on the thinking of Patristic theologians, especially Augustine, whose writings profoundly effected the Church's view of sex and marriage. Part II will interpret three biological and psychological misconceptions that contributed significantly to a negative outlook. The Jewish writer, like most ancients, believed that the wasting of semen was sinful because it contained the full potential for a child regardless of the woman's role. Augustine thought our sexual drives are under the influence of concupiscence and, therefore, suspicious, while Freud saw the same phenomenon, libinal drives, as quite natural. Finally, Aquinas understood the loss of reason during sexual activity as an example of sin while most psychologists today see it as a natural prerequisite for normal orgasm. These will be dealt with in Part II but first let us look at the historical role dualism played in formulating the Christian understanding of sexuality.

PART I: DUALISM

Introduction

Numerous authors (Cole, 1954; de Vinck, 1966; Mace, 1970) suggest that an anti-sexual trend developed in early Christianity because of the influence of dualism. The writings of Paul reveal a mixture of his Jewish naturalistic heritage and his Greek philosophical training in dualism. The sexual negativism found in the writings of early Christian theologians is often traced back to the dualistic theology and philosophy prevalent at the time of the Patristic Age (cf. Chapter III, Patristic Age). Augustine's statements on human sexuality are based, in part, on a Platonic anthropology which insisted on the soul's superiority to, and independence of, the body, and in part on Manichaean theology stating, in essence, that flesh is evil. Both Platonism and Manichaeism are forms of dualism essential to tracing the origins of sexual negativism in the Christian tradition.

Definitions

Dualism is a doctrine which holds that the world (reality) consists of two basic opposed and irreducible principles that account for all that exists.

In religious thought, dualism is understood as the battle between two antithetical, supreme powers, Good and Evil. Religious dualistic themes are the opposition between sacred and profane, good and evil, life and death, and body and soul. The function of religious dualism is usually either cosmological in nature, explaining the structure of the universe, or anthropological, dealing with the nature and destiny of man. Dualism may be absolute or relative; absolute when the two principles upheld have existed from all eternity, and relative when one of the principles is derived from the other. Within dualism is an eschatological or dialectical dimension. Eschatological dualism constitutes a series of unrepeatable events in the history of the universe. These events lead to a specific destiny designed by their Creator. Dialectical dualism involves the eternal repetition of the same events in history and is, therefore, cyclical in contrast to eschatological dualism, which signifies a specific goal and is therefore linear.

Origins

Though no explicit dualism is found in ancient religions, it was implicitly contained in mythology as exemplified in the contrast and battles between various gods. In Egypt dualism was implicitly contained in the myth between the gods Seth and Osiris. Seth, a violent, aggressive, sterile god, opposed Osiris, god of fertility and life in the waters of the Nile. In the Babylonian myth of the origins of the gods and the world we witness in the opposing forces of the gods Tiamat and Marduk (cf. Chapter II, Egypt and Babylon). But most important for our study are the traces of dualism found in ancient Greece in the writings of Hesiod (800 B.C.). He conceived dualism in the primordial battles between the gods: Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus. Dualism becomes more explicit in classical Greece among the pre-Socratic philosophers (6th and 5th century B.C.). Dualism becomes a philosophical way of thinking offering answers to the nature of man and his universe. Heracleitus, noted for reducing the world to fiery change, speaks about the conflict of opposites: hot-cold, beginning-end, way-up versus way-down. Later, Orphism, a Greek mystical school, developed a psychophysical dualism of body and soul. The body is compared to a tomb or prison which encloses the soul, a divine element akin to the gods.

These early Greek philosophers set the stage for one of the greatest philosophers the Western world has ever known. He is deeply influenced by dualism and will develop it into a system of thought that Christians will inherit, and will help establish the foundation of Western man's conception of human nature. It is this author's contention that Plato's concept of man is the seed from which germinated many of the negativisms concerning human sexuality manifested in the Christian tradition.

Plato

Plato was born in Athens (424-348 B.C.) of noble parents. He was both an athlete and a poet, devoting most of his intellectual life to the pursuit of knowledge through dialectics and philosophy. His method consisted mainly in the dialectical approach of going from particular, concrete, sense phenomena to universal ideas and forms. Plato believed that all men possessed an inborn love for goodness and truth but must purge bodily desires in order to arrive at pure good and truth. To accomplish this goal three different but complementary methods are to be followed according to the object under consideration.

First, when the individual experiences concrete, sensible phenomenon, his mind can formulate a hypothesis and logically deduce from it abstract reality. Second, moral truths can be arrived at through myths. Third, the greatest means to arrive at truth is through the use of reason alone without assistance from the senses. This dialectical method is dramatized in Plato's Dialogues through his dynamic spokesman, Socrates.

Plato's greatest intuition is his notion of Form. The rest of his philosophy is a function of this central concept. Scholars generally recognize Plato's notion of Form as the unifying element of a dynamic, dichotomous dualism that pervades four dominant aspects of reality.

Epistemological Dualism:

In his famous allegory of the cave, Plato distinguished between universal and particular and transitory opinion. Sense perception is concerned with continually changing, relative and shadowy images, it must necessarily be fallible and only an opinion. On the other hand, true knowledge is oriented towards the stable, absolute, and universal properties of cognition and leads to eternal truth while sense perception distorts the truth. Plato was looking for the Truth and an escape from the ever-changing material world. He found his answers in what we today call concept formation. But he believed that these abstract concepts existed in another world separate from the sensible world. It was a world of timeless, intelligible things of which sensible phenomena were merely a transitory occurance. By opposing the two worlds he introduced a strict duality in his epistemological thinking, though he unified his intellectual system under the name Form.

Metaphysical Dualism:

Corresponding to the two kinds of cognition mentioned above, Plato distinguished two radically different entities: absolute reality is the object of intellection, relative phenomena is the object of sense perception. Absolute reality is found in universal concepts that are transcendent, unalterable, universal, and intelligible. These suprasensible, immutable forms alone are fully real and intelligible since reality is purely rational in so far as it is changing.

Accordingly, one can say that relative phenomena perceived by the senses is not absolutely real, nor fully knowable since it is in constant change. The cosmologist cannot attain a full understanding of the physical world and must be satisfied with subjective opinion. Sensible things are only relatively real and intelligible only in their participation in absolute, real, universal, intelligible forms. An example of this: a flower is beautiful only to the degree it participates in absolute beauty. Plato introduces an ontological dualism between sense perception and intelligible forms.

Psychological Dualism:

Between the realm of forms and the sensible world there exists what Plato calls mathematical objects on an intermediate level — souls. Souls share both in the ideal world of intelligible form and are, therefore, immortal and in the sensible world in so far as they are encased in the body, living and moving. Plato's understanding of man is that he is composed of a body, akin to corporeal phenomena and a soul, akin to absolute, universal forms. The soul exercises two basic functions; self-moving and consciousness. The soul is self-moving and conscious, therefore, the source of life and the seat of intellectual and moral operations. Plato subdivided the soul into three parts: the appetitive, unruly and in search of sensible pleasures; the spirited, noble and prompt to honor and courage; the rational, able to contemplate pure form. He considered the latter part of the soul as the "god within man." The irrational parts, appetitive and spiritual, like the body, are mortal, whereas the rational is immortal. Plato believed that the irrational soul constantly yearns for liberation because of a faint remembrance from which it came before entering the body, i.e., from the rational soul. The chief task of life is controlling the irrational soul and the passions of the body which interfere with the functioning of the immortal, rational soul. The rational soul is calling man to return to the stable, absolute, universal forms it once contemplated in a pre-existing state that has almost been forgotten since its ingression into the body. This dualism between body and soul and within the soul itself was incorporated into Christian doctrine and contributed significantly to the Christian deprecation of the material world especially the physical body whose fantasies and desires interfered with the soul's contemplation of pure form.

Politicoethical Dualism:

The philosophical dualism of Plato finds its practical application and extension in the contrast between ideal values and relative, phenomenal values. The supreme good in Plato's ethical system is the supreme value which directs all other values. The ethos of man's life on earth is the caring for his soul, gradually liberating it from the bonds of one's body. In his writings, Plato applies his ethics in the Republic, Statesman and the Laws. These are monumental works on political government. The organization of the ideal political state parallels his three-fold structure of the human soul; the lowest class of workers, the guardians, and the elite, especially in knowledge, who will govern in the light of ideal values. The ideal state is philosophical, a true polity in which one or more philosopher-kings, enlightened by reason, will guide the masses.

Most scholars conclude that Plato's Dialogues contain one of the finest philosophies ever envisaged by the human mind. For over two thousand years his philosophical influence has been felt by Western man. He profoundly influenced Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas; and more recently Thomas Taylor, William Blake, Emerson, and Whitehead. Western man is indebted to his task of synthesizing a vast amount of knowledge under his fundamental insight, Form. However, scholars are beginning to recognize the contributing effect his dualistic concept of body-spirit had in creating a negative attitude towards the human body.

The Influence of Platonism on Sexuality

Plato founded an Academy at Athens that existed from 387 B.C. to A.D. 529. The succession of philosophers of this Academy are identified as early, middle, or Neo-Platonists. In this study, Platonism refers to any philosophy that derives its ultimate inspiration from the Dialogues of Plato regardless of the above-mentioned categories.

Before the beginning of the Christian era, we find only a slight trace of Greek education expounded in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament. We already have noted that Paul's writings begin to reveal the profound influence Greek philosophy had on early Christianity. Early Christian scholars regarded Platonic philosophy as the best available schema for understanding and defending the teachings of Scripture and tradition.

These early theologians searched for an anthropological and psychological understanding of man in which they could incorporate their new religion. Most Patristic theologians, because they were schooled in Platonism, believed in a dualistic concept of man. They understood man as being composed of two distinct entities: body and soul. They made a radical departure from the Biblical anthropology of man which stated that man was "Nephesh" a oneness in spirit and body. The naturalistic understanding of man gave way to dualism. The early theologians Origen and Tertullian concluded that the spiritual aspect of man (soul) was destined for life eternal while the corporeal phenomenon (body) was inferior and destined for decay. They concluded that man must use his powers of self-discipline to control the body and its passions that interfere with the soul's quest to return to its original Creator. They believed that man's senses distorted the truth of God and that only through contemplating ultimate Reality could he come to the Truth. They saw the physical world as transitory, relative, and unreliable while the realm of heaven as unalterable, eternal, and intelligible. They believed, as did Plato, that the chief task of life is to control the irrational and passionate aspects that interfere with the functioning of the immortal soul. It was this metaphysical view of man, with its unique emphasis on the corporeal body and the timeless soul, which instilled in the Christian tradition a fundamental skepticism of the body, its impulses and pleasures. In one sense it contributed to the mind-body split still found in Western thought while in another sense, it has contributed to Western man's alienation from his body.

The influence of Platonism had an enduring negative effect on the attitudes of Christians in the realm of human sexuality.

Because man's body was inferior, (merely a tomb for the soul) it must be denied, purged of its vicissitudes and made a slave to the soul. Sexuality came under attack as an undesirable expression of the body. Some concluded that sexuality was evil because it was so intimately linked with the body; sexuality distracted the soul from its pursuit of a higher Good. The sexual act was the cause of the body's entrance into the physical world and, therefore, deemed suspicious. Sexual intercourse not only transmitted the seed for a body that would entomb the soul but also transmitted the primordial sin of our first parents.

Among the first Christian scholars to use Greek philosophy in the service of the faith was Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-166), whose philosophy influenced numerous subsequent Christian theologians such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Believing in the dual existence of body and soul, he concluded that the Christian message insisted that one should ideally remain a virgin or celibate, purging one's body of every sexual appetite.

Tertullian (A.D. 150-230) focused his disdain for the human body by attacking women as the devil's gateway, the perpetrator of evil whose body gives birth to man's flesh and whose sin in the Garden of Eden caused the Son of God to take on flesh and suffer death.

Other early theologians, such as Origen and Jerome, believed that men and women should refrain from sexual activity, purging themselves of sexual desires in order to better contemplate eternal truths. They saw this world as a passing, corruptible phenomenon unworthy of man's ultimate concern because of his final destiny in the other realm.

Augustine (A.D. 354-430) was the greatest of all Patristic theologians, the founder of the classical Christian doctrine on sex and marriage, and like many of his predecessors, was educated in the philosophy of Platonism. He espoused the concept that man was composed of body and soul. Though he never condemned the material world as inherently evil, he was suspicious of its influence on man's soul. He viewed the irrational function of the body and soul as destructive to the spiritual nature of man. Because of sin, man has an insatiable desire, a compulsiveness, a lack of control over his bodily appetites, especially sexual desires. This burning compulsiveness, (also known as concupiscence) is a consequence and a punishment of sin. Augustine concluded that man must fight to gain control over his bodily appetites, never giving way to desire and pleasure.

Another dualistic system which had a significant effect on Augustine and other early Christian theologians was Manichaeism. This time, it did not originate in Greece but rather in the Orient. There were numerous oriental, philosophical-theological dualistic systems appearing during the first five centuries of the Christian era but the works of Mani in particular had a very significant effect in shaping the attitudes of Christians towards their sexual nature.

Manichaeism: A Religious Dualism

Manichaeism exerted a substantial influence on early Christian theologians, especially Augustine, who was its disciple before his conversion to Christianity. Because of its religious views on the body and, in particular, human sexuality, the author deems it important to briefly explain some of its beliefs and demonstrate how they affected the attitudes early Christians held towards sexuality.

Definition and Origin

Manichaeism is a complex dualistic religion essentially gnostic in character. Its founder, Mani, was born in A.D. 216 in Babylon of Armenian race. He owed his faith to a double revelation at the age of 12 and 24, respectively, from the Messenger of the King of Paradise of Lights. He became a founder of a revealed religion, a missionary religion which attracted large numbers of apostles and disciples who subsequently traversed the world, and made Manichaeism a universal religion, of which a few living vestiges remain in the 20th century.

Manichaeism has a dualistic conception of cosmology, admitting from the genesis of creation a radical duality and opposition: Light versus Darkness, Good versus Evil. The origin of the material world, of evil, and sin is found in this duality of two uncreated Principles, Good and Evil. This is the central point in Manichaeism doctrine.

Important to our study is the moral attitude fostered by Mani: He envisaged two types of morality that man should follow. First, negative morality is one of abstention. This morality is dictated by the knowledge of evil residing in the material world. It is a form of asceticism. One must withdraw, separate, abstain from meat, wine, and especially sexual contacts. Everything related to sexuality was considered evil. Man must flee all sexual delights and desires. Any contact between male and female on a sexual level was condemned. Sexual abstinence was seen as a virtue.

Secondly, positive morality urged the disciple to go further than asceticism and impelled a positive redemption through the liberating action of the particles of Light. Every Manichaean was charged with this message of salvation. This method had its repercussions in every detail of daily life and a refusal to accept this truth would result in certain damnation.

Manichaeism's Influence on Sexual Attitudes

The Christian Church condemned all forms of gnosis as heretical, including Manichaeism, Gnosticism, and Montanism. Especially through the writings of Augustine, the Church attacked Manichaeism on the doctrinal level, but with less conviction and success on the level of human living. After studying early Christianity, this author contends that certain Manichaean practises and beliefs (especially in the sexual area) had a lasting influence on Christianity. At the time, the Manichaeans believed in strict abstinence from all sexual activity for the elect, while Christians were encouraged to live a celibate or virginal life. Christians were developing a strong suspicion of the material world at the time Manichaeans were professing that matter is evil. Though one must be cautious not to establish a cause and effect relationship between negative sexual attitudes among Christians and the Manichaean influence, one can conclude that Manichaeism did have a significant impact on Christian beliefs.

Conclusion

Though the Church had condemned certain religious forms of dualism and gnosticism during the first five centuries, they prevailed to create a negative attitude towards the physical world. Various dualistic themes contributed to new interpretations of traditional Biblical themes. The Genesis story of the Fall was given a sexual interpretation; not only did Adam and Eve fall into disgrace because of the sexual act but all subsequent sexual acts of the human race contributed to the continuation of evil in the world.

Plato's division of body and soul was endorsed by most early Christian theologians as well as his excessive spiritualism and dematerialization as an ideal. Though few Christian theologians ever explicitly stated that the material world was essentially evil, as the Manichaeans did, they were suspicious of it and expressed it in relative dualistic terms: sacred and profane, heaven and earth, "higher and lower," spirit and flesh. Theologians concluded that since sex is purely of the flesh, we should reduce the physiological act of sex to the minimum required for procreation and that the ideal would be the complete elimination of all human sexual experience.

Some contemporary Christian theologians still endorse an implicit dualistic belief of a sharp contrast between body and soul, leaving one to conclude that the body is inferior because of its finiteness and relationships to the earth while the soul is immortal and destined for heaven. However, others (Baum, 1971; Niebuhr, 1942) believe that man must be seen from a wholistic viewpoint. Any division of man into separate parts such as body and soul destroys the true concept of man. They conclude that the fundamental message of Christ is found in the Resurrection of the body-soul person; it would be against God's creative design for the body not to be glorified at the consummation of the world. Teilhard de Chardin (1927/1965) postulated that all matter is spiritualized; that the spirit of God and man permeates the material world. These theologians do not see man's struggle as a battle between his bodily appetites and his soul but rather as a unification, an integration process of everything that constitutes man.

Psychologists such as Fromm (1956), May (1953), and Walker (1970) imply that a logical consequence of a dualism which denigrates the physical aspect of human existence, contributes to the anxiety felt by modern man. They believe that modern man experiences a sense of "drifting," of "uprootedness" because he is out of touch with his body. Man is failing to experience his self and environment based upon personal experiences of instinctual and biological urges, sensations, perceptions, and needs. He is becoming "schizoid," manifested as a split in the self in which there is lacking a total participation in daily living.

Sexually, the "schizoid" person participates in the experience at the same time that he stands back and observes his performance while the total personal involvement is lacking. An example of this phenomenon can be drawn from the proliferation of "sex manuals" and in some of the "homework" offered by the Behaviorists. Many believe that the "sex manuals" will give them answers to their sexual problem once they have mastered a proper technique or, if proper reinforcement is introduced and the environment manipulated sufficiently, the desired response will occur.

The identification of the body as a sexual machine or as a burden to the soul originates from the same dualistic thinking but from different perspectives. The solution is not found in the tyranny of the body nor in the exultation of the soul but in the integration of the body-spirit as the means of restoring the inner unity, characterized by the harmony of thought, feeling, and act.

PART II: MISCONCEPTIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Introduction

Our study has shown that dualism had a significant influence on early Christian scholars. Manichaeism and Platonism contributed to the belief that man can be understood in terms of body and soul. Most early Christians accepted this belief and concluded that their souls were destined for heaven (or hell) and their bodies for decay. They were warned that their sexual appetites, belonging to their bodies, were a source of grave danger and a potential damnation to their souls. This philosophical-theological concept of human nature served to accentuate and bolster a number of sexual misconceptions that lead to an even greater deprecation of sexuality.

Part II of this chapter will outline three misconceptions which contributed significantly to a sexual negativism still felt today in certain Christian circles. These misconceptions include: (1) Masturbation and other forms of semen waste is a sin because the male seed contains the full potential for a future child while the woman functions only as an incubator; (2) Augustine's concept of concupiscence and fear of sexual passions contributed to misunderstandings of libidinal drives; and (3) Aquinas' application of right reason mislead many Christians to conclude that sexual passions of themselves are evil.

Wasting of Semen

The Hebrews, like other ancient peoples, did not understand human reproduction in terms of semen and ovum. They reasoned from what they observed in nature. A seed is planted in the soil, nourished by water and sun, and springs forth. Likewise, man plants a seed in a woman who acts like a sort of incubator and the seed, nourished by her menstrual flow, develops into a child. The Hebrews believed that the male's seed contained the full potential for a child and the woman served only as the medium for growth. Consequently, any wasting of semen was a direct wasting of a future child.

We have previously noted that the Hebrews considered procreation a religious duty; not only did it provide for one's immortality, but responded to God's message that a Messiah would be born of a Jew. Wasting semen was in direct violation not only of their human laws but of God's as well. The Hebrews developed a strong abhorrence towards the act of masturbation, onanism, or any other form of semen waste.

Modern biology reveals that each ejaculation contains millions of sperm and the female ovum plays an equally important role in procreation. The wasting of semen is a natural part of every act of intercourse. Today, no one concludes, as did the Hebrews, that the wasting of semen results in the destruction of a potential child. However, masturbation and other forms of semen waste continue to be condemned within certain Christian churches partly because of this misconception of reproduction.

Concupiscence and Libido

Augustine is considered one of the greatest Christian theologians; few theologians have written as profoundly and effectively on the nature of God and man's relationship to Him. His works have survived sixteen centuries and continue to be the foundation of orthodox Christian theology. However, few Church historians doubt the theory that Augustine possessed an inordinate fear of sexual passion. Perhaps this was due to his turbulent sexual history.

Reflecting back on his sixteenth year when the "madness of lust" took control of him, Augustine stated: "Arrived now at adolescence, I burned for all the satisfactions of hell, and I sank to the animal in a succession of dark lusts" (Augustine, 399/1943, p. 27). He could not live without sex, though he despised it: "I was bound by this need of the flesh, and dragged with me the chain of its poisonous delight" (Augustine, 399/1943, p. 164). Augustine finally found an answer to his "insatiable lust" in Christianity. His desires were gone, his tastes had changed, his appetites had undergone a radical transformation, and his sexual energies were sublimated in the defense of the Church. However, his writings on marriage and sex reflected an intense fear of sexual passions which contributed to a number of misconceptions concerning man's libidinal drives.

Augustine considered man's sexual instincts dangerous and in need of constant control. He believed that sexual passion is contaminated by a driving, uncontrollable impulse called concupiscence. This impulse, independent of man's will and reason, is the consequence of sin. He further concluded that sin (and the consequence of sin) are transmitted to each person through the sexual act. He postulated that sexual desires and pleasures were tainted with sin, which led him to state that virginity and celibacy were superior styles of life to marriage. The Church has incorporated most of Augustine's thinking into its teachings on human sexuality, and consequently, created a negative attitude that still survives in our contemporary society. For example, some Christian churches still maintain that intense sexual passion, even within legitimate marriage, is sinful. Within the official Catholic Church the primary purpose of sex is procreation and not pleasure.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) innovated a major breakthrough in our understanding of sexuality when he wrote Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality. His writings on infantile sexuality cast into doubt many of the sexual beliefs held by the Church since the time of Augustine. Freud stated that sexual instincts are a complex process at the root of our personality development and are both biological and psychological in nature. He defined these instincts as "a quantitatively variable force (or energy) which could serve as a measure of processes and transformations occurring in the field of sexual excitation" (Freud, 1915/1972, p. 118). This quantitative energy or motor force he called libido.

The libido theory is a conceptual scheme designed to explain the nature and manifestations of the sex drive through successive stages of human development. Freud extended the term "sex" from the commonly understood sense of pleasure derived through orgasm to pleasurable experiences once considered nonsexual. Sex in this broader sense is the central theme of psychoanalytic theory and hinges on Freud's theory of infantile sexuality. Before Freud it was commonly understood that the sexual awakening at puberty was the start of one's sexual life. Freud, however, postulated that a newborn child is endowed with a certain libidinal "capital." Our psychosexual development is the process by which this diffuse and labile sexual "capital" or energy is invested in certain pleasurable zones of the body (mouth, anus, genital) at successive states of childhood. Freud concluded that the vicissitudes of this sexual energy during psychosexual development determine not only sexual functioning but exert considerable influence on the entire personality structure.

Contrary to the general Christian tradition, Freud insisted that the primary purpose of sex is not reproduction but pleasure. He demonstrated that this pleasure is manifested in a number of ways during childhood and adulthood. While analyzing his clients he concluded that sexual instincts pervade the entire personality and the excessive denial or repression of them contributes to an unhealthy personality.

Many contemporary psychologists agree with Freud's statement that sexual instincts pervade most facets of our personality and maintain a central position in our psychological development. Many agree that Freud has contributed more than any other person or any single event in modifying the sexual attitudes of Western man.

Freud understood sexual instinct as central to normal development, therefore natural and inescapable. Augustine, however, was suspicious of sexual desires of any kind and tried desperately to escape them. Freud saw infantile sexuality capable of polymorphism and the channeling of this energy later on in life would contribute to the healthy life of the individual. Augustine, viewing our sexual nature as contaminated by an inordinate desire (concupiscence) believed that it must always be under strict control. Freud would agree with Augustine that our sexual instincts must be controlled but through the natural outlets of sexual experiences or through sublimation. Augustine stated that the way to control these instincts is through the "natural" way of marriage or through the denial or repression of their existence, two defenses considered harmful by Freud.

Defenses, according to Freud, are the basis of neurotic disorders. He defined them as "psychogenic in nature depending upon the operation of unconscious ideational complexes. . . They originate in the sexual needs of unsatisfied people, and represent a kind of substitute for gratification of them" (Freud, 1908/1970, p. 24). Augustine considered repression and denial as virtuous whereas Freud understood them as defenses predisposing an individual to numerous forms of psychoneuroses, demanding a great expenditure of psychic energy, and creating inner improverishment and mental anguish.

Freud would agree with Augustine that sexual energy should be sublimated or channeled to the good of an idea, but he strongly disagrees with Augustine that sublimation is good for every individual or that total sublimation without some direct sexual outlet is healthy.

Freud saw the process of libidinal development going from an auto-erotic stage to one of object-love. He understood the healthy individual as using sexual energy to move from self-centered narcissism to an extension of self to others in "love and work." Augustine saw little good in our sexual instincts. He concluded that every sexual fantasy, desire, pleasure is accomplished by concupiscence and, therefore, dangerous to the soul. He could not understand, as did Freud, that our sexual drive could be good, compelling us to leave our self-centered world and unite with another in an intense physical and psychological way. One can only speculate that Augustine's fears of sexual passion contributed significantly to the negative sexual tradition established in the early Church and perpetuated through the centuries by the institutional Church.

Loss of Reason: Sexual Passion

Aquinas was the master synthesizer of Christian doctrine, incorporating the works of Augustine and Aristotle into a theological system which is still adhered to in Roman Catholicism. He presented a balanced view of the order of creation and its relationship to the Creator. The main premise of Aquinas' ethical system is that man should live according to right reason. He stated that bodily appetites or impulses are not evil in themselves but must remain under the control of reason. Consequently, any human passion that is given free reign without due guidance by reason is sinful.

Christians concluded from Aquinas writings that passions, especially in the sexual realm, are evil and lead to sin. Virtue is understood as the complete control over bodily appetites according to the will of God interpreted by the Church. Because of these beliefs, many Christians understood their sexual experiences to be virtuous only if they were always under the direct control of personal reason.

Few would disagree with Aquinas that to give free reign to our sexual passions, regardless of circumstances, could have disastrous results for the individual. The sexual freedom found in contemporary society has not produced the liberating effect envisioned by some. On the contrary, May (1953) points out that many have become disillusioned by "free and easy" sex manifested by existential anxiety contributing to apathy or violence.

Within the sexual experience itself there is a need to surrender both reason and will if the experience is to be rewarding and dignify the integrity of the person. Robinson (1959) states that the height of the sexual act, orgasm, must be preceded by the voluntary decision of surrendering one's capacity to control self and other through the use of reason and will.

May (1969) has observed that one cause of sexual anxiety in our society is fear of passion. He believes that modern man is fearful of the "daemonic" forces within himself because he is alienated from the instinctual drives rooted in his nature. As a consequence, modern man goes through the act of intercourse without sufficient involvement. May sees this as a modern form of Puritanism; alientation from the body, separation of emotion from reason, and the use of the body as a machine.

It is my contention that many Christians have experienced a form of sexual Puritanism partly due to the teachings of Aquinas. His teaching contributed to the misconception that within the sexual experience control over the body by the reason and will was virtuous. It followed that the alienation of emotions from reason contributed to the already present fear of sexual passions leading to a denial of the experience.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Our study has focused mainly on the influence of dualistic thinking in the understanding of sexuality. At the time Christianity began to formulate its basic theological doctrines, the dominant theme in philosophy and theology was dualism manifested primarily in Platonism and in various forms of gnosis. There is sufficient evidence in the writings of Patristic theologians to demonstrate the significant influence dualism had on Christian thought; one consequence of this influence was the advent of a deep seated suspiciousness and even hatred of the material world, with special hostility towards sexual pleasure.

Traces of dualism are found in contemporary Christianity in the religious themes of body-soul, heaven-earth, sacred-profane. The attitude of some Christians that the body, though created by God, is inferior because of its unruly appetites and mortality can trace its origin to dualism. We have indicated that some psychologists speak of the "schizoid" characteristic of modern man; his bodily functions appear isolated from his spirit, his emotions and feelings. We often witness man being treated solely on the behavioral level without consideration for his spiritual nature. His body is seen as a machine that functions well sexually if the proper "manuals" are followed. Some psychologists believe we are witnessing a new form of Puritanism today in which man has divorced his body from his soul. We can conclude from these examples that Philosophical dualism, especially that formulated by Plato, incorporated into Christianity, continues to influence contemporary man.

Our study pointed out various misconceptions on sexuality. One of these misconceptions is the abhorrence of semen waste based on the Hebrew understanding of reproduction. Recently, the Catholic Church (cf. Chapter III, Contemporary Catholicism) promulgated that masturbation is a "disordered act" and therefore sinful. Our study has shown that this anti-masturbation attitude, in part, has its origins in early Christianity and in the Hebrew belief that semen waste results in the destruction of a potential child.

Another misconception is based on the fear of sexual passions found in the writings of Augustine. Many Christians continue to show an inordinate fear of their sexual instincts and refuse to educate their children on sexual matters because of these fears. We have suggested that Augustine himself experienced severe sexual anxieties as revealed in his Confessions, and that he was intellectually influenced by Platonism and Manichaeism.

Finally, we indicated that some Christians believe that control over sexual passions is virtuous. A misunderstanding of Aquinas' teachings that every act must be under the control of reason contributed to a negative view of sexual passions. Aquinas never considered the use of sexual passions, ordained for a good, as evil, but his writings inclined his followers to conclude that sexual passions, when not under control of reason, are evil.

The influence of dualism and these misconceptions have contributed to the sexual negativism found in the Christian tradition. Our study will now focus on three other contributing factors which are more sociological in nature: clerical control, anti-feminism, and the effects of an Age of Transition.

CHAPTER V

PSYCHO-HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: II

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter established two general reasons for the development of a negative sexual attitude within the Christian tradition: firstly, philosophical and theological dualism contributed significantly to Western man's belief that his nature is divided into two entities, body and soul, and that the body holds an inferior position; and, secondly, biological-psychological misconceptions concerning semen waste, libidinal drives and loss of reason in sexual passion, advanced the notion that sexual appetites had to be handled with orderly caution and constant moderation.

The general purpose of this chapter is to propose three additional factors, more sociological in nature, that also contributed to the negative attitude we are studying. This chapter is divided into three parts: Part I determines as a contributing factor the effects of clerical control; the hierarchy frequently imposed laws governing sexual behavior that contributed to their dominance over laymen and imposed on themselves laws of sexual abstinence and celibacy which contributed to an enhancement of their role as "pure" and "superior" members of the Church. Part II presents an overview of the anti-feminist attitude manifested by early Church writers (the reasons for which reflected their fear of sexuality in general). Part III attempts to apply psychological viewpoints which suggest that an "Age of Transition" during fourth century Christianity contributed to an identity crisis similar to that experienced by the adolescent when he comes to grips with his own sexuality.

PART I: CLERICAL CONTROL: POLITICAL ASPECT OF SEXUALITY

Introduction

Anthropological studies reveal that every society establishes fundamental laws governing the sexual behavior of its members (Mead, 1970). The formulation of *sexual* laws rests in the hands of the governing elite of each society, whether it is the chief of an African tribe enforcing premarital intercourse on the spouses-to-be, or Parliament enacting laws forbidding homosexual acts. Various reasons are given for these laws: religious, superstitious, physiological, or psychological; however, political reasons are often overlooked. This study will focus briefly on societal leaders enforcing laws which govern sexual behavior in order to better control their subordinates.

Church as Society

The Church has been defined as the "People of God," and the "Community of Believers." This community has a particular structure with governing laws and a ruling hierarchy. The Church can, therefore, be defined as a society; *religious* because of its spiritual founder and its message, and *secular* because its members are involved in a particular culture at a specific time in history.

At the beginning of the Church, Jesus designated certain men, known as Apostles, to serve as leaders. As the community expanded, laws were established to control the behavior of its members; among these laws were numerous references to sexual behavior. The earliest extant

Christian law governing sexual behavior is found in the eighty canons of the Council of Elvira (309). Many of these laws, if violated, resulted in excommunication or expulsion from the Church. Our study will focus on how the promulgation of these sexual codes contributed to the control of Christian sexual behavior as well as to the enhancement of the power of Church leaders and a deprecation of sexuality itself.

Council of Elvira (309)

Bishops and priests gathered from various parts of Spanish Christendom to formulate laws governing Church affairs. Foremost in their mind was the issue of idolatry and the status of pagan converts, especially pagan priests. Surprisingly, they spent little time on these issues and focused more on human sexuality. From the concluding eighty-one canons and laws promulgated by this Synod no less than thirty-five dealt with human sexuality and its expression (Laeuchli, 1972).

The first law regulating the sex life of the cleric was written at this Council: "Bishops, presbyters and deacons and all other clerics having a position in the ministry are ordered to abstain completely from their wives and not to have children" (Laeuchli, 1972, p. 130). This was not a law of celibacy, since most clerics were married, but one of abstinence. The layman was told to live the ideal life of sexual purity and exclusivity. Every aspect of his sexual life began to be circumscribed by various laws. All premarital and extramarital sexual experiences were harshly condemned. These laws of the Council of Elvira are important to our study because they were the first of their kind.

and continue until this day to exercise a dominance in Christian sexual thinking.

The clerical elite at this Council were searching for ways to channel Christianity not only to promote identity among the people but also to better control their life styles, their attitudes, and their behavior. The Church was becoming more autocratic, a ruling power not only in the religious domain, but in the secular as well. The Diocletian persecutions were ending and Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, was forming a new relationship between Christianity and world secular powers. Clerics no longer controlled their subordinates primarily by means of the external conflicts with imperial ideology (for it was no longer necessary to define Christians as those who worshipped Jesus and not Caesar) but rather through the promulgation of countless laws governing their daily lives. Many of these laws focused on the personal sexual experiences of the Christian. It is my opinion that the clerical elite of the time believed that they would exert greater control over their people by controlling their sexual behavior. Priest-psychologist, Kennedy (1972) referred to this point when he stated:

> Too many Churchmen think that a return to morality means going back to the days when they could complacently control human behavior at a comfortable distance. They were a clever lot, however, because they understood man's vulnerabilities, and they knew that if they could control his sexual attitudes they could effectively control him. (p. 11.)

Kennedy's observation does not pertain solely to the contemporary Church but to every period of Church history for religious leaders as in the time of the Council of Elvira often show an inordinate desire to control the lives of men through laws regulating sexual behavior.

Clerical Celibacy

Laeuchli (1972) postulates that in order to secure their role as leaders in the sexual sphere of personal life, clerics demanded of themselves that they live more "purely" then the layman. He believes that some clerics who practiced sexual abstinence thought they had the right of leadership merely because of this practise. We cannot conclude that clerical celibacy exerts a cause-effect relationship with clerical control; however, celibacy has served to enhance the clerical image as the "pure" representative of the Church. It has contributed to a vertical relationship between the "pure" leaders and the "married" secular members. The image of the "pure" and, consequently, superior members of the community appeared to have increased the controlling power of the celibate clerical elite.

By the same token, clerical celibates themselves are vulnerable to the controlling forces of their superiors because of the ascetic ideal of celibacy. When man and woman become existentially committed to each other personal barriers begin to break down. Because of this they become vulnerable to manipulation by their partner and yet are less vulnerable to outside manipulation because of the security found through their own intimate relationship. The clerical celibate who does not have the security of a man-woman relationship could be subject to greater manipulation by outside forces such as ecclesiastical authority. Thus, maintaining clerical celibacy appears to have contributed to the control of the sexual lives of laymen and the personal lives of clerics as well, adding strength to the hierarchical structure of the Church.

Church: Parental Control

The Church has repeatedly addressed itself as the Mother of the People of God, its members as sons and daughters. Within this context, "Church" is usually referred to as the ecclesiastical governing body. Church history is replete with examples of the hierarchy (in the name of God and "pure theology") controlling the thinking and behavior of its members (cf. A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology by Andrew White, 1955). Numerous examples could be cited but one in particular stands out among the rest: the case of Galileo. After countless harassments by the ecclesiastical authorities, in 1615 Galileo was summoned before the Inquisition at Rome. He was forced to deny his theories of the solar system, his empirical observations, and to profess that "the sun is the center and does not revolve about the earth is foolish, absurd, false in theology, and heretical, because expressly contrary to Holy Scripture" (cited in White, 1955, p. 137). Galileo, under threat of physical torture, yielded to the demands of the hierarchical Church.

The Church used its powers of excommunication, torture and even execution upon those who would not obey. Yet, by the same token, the Church has also been a benevolent Parent, offering strength, courage and consolation to the afflicted. Our study focuses on the Parent-Church who has exercised undue force and has not allowed her "children" to follow their own conscience in matters of sexuality.

The essential role of parenthood is to give birth, nurture, protect, educate, and finally, set free the offspring when it is sufficiently independent. The Church has played well its parental role in all stages except the latter. It has not fulfilled its role in allowing the offspring to be sufficiently free to follow their own conscience, especially in the sexual area.

A phenomenon experienced by most parents when their offspring leave home and enter into sexual relationships is a feeling of powerlessness or a loss of control over their children's lives. The Parent-Church appears reluctant to relinquish parental control when its members want to act sexually independent. Our study has shown the controlling power of the Church at the Council of Elvira, in the development of the Penitentials, Code of Canon Law, and in the writings of its theologians. Evidence of this point was revealed in the Catholic Church during its debates on the agenda of the Ecumenical Council, Vatican II (1962-1965).

A Case in Point: Vatican II

In 1961 Pope John XXIII had spoken the word "aggiornamento" referring to the Catholic Church opening its windows to allow fresh ideas and new light to be shed on old traditions. One year later, two thousand five hundred Bishops, Cardinals, and other elite religious leaders from around the world began an earnest dialogue with Protestants, Jews, atheists, and others. In a spirit of openness they addressed themselves to the question of revelation, liturgy, the role of the Church, Church authority, ecumenism, and religious freedom. However, they refused to debate issues such as birth control, divorce, priestly celibacy, and human sexuality in general. They expounded on the nature of conjugal love (cf. Chapter III, The Church Today) but never brought up the pressing issues mentioned above. A Vatican committee had judged them inappropriate for consideration by the hierarchy, but ten years later every one of these issues had been given attention by Vatican authorities, and, without consultation with the rest of the Church, decrees were issued condemning artificial birth control, premarital sex, masturbation, and homosexual acts. The law of celibacy for all clerics was again reiterated. Vatican II, noted for its openness, was not allowed by a small Vatican elite to discuss these issues, thereby promoting the historically concervative stance held by the Catholic Church for centuries.

What is the reason for this reticence to modify traditional positions? I believe that to change the sexual teachings of the Church, sustained by the ideal of an unmarried clerical elite, and by a dominant-submissive order in human relationships, would realign the power structure of the Church. Vatican II did not come to grips with the contemporary "Sexual Revolution" because the issue was too dangerous; to change its position on sexual behavior and ideals would weaken traditional authority. Such a transformation within Church thinking would have immense economic, political, and psychological implications. It would change the structure of the parish, the image of the priest, the understanding of personal ethics and human development, but more important, it would undermine the vertical authority structure of the Catholic Church. The hierarchical structure of the Church can be compared to a pyramid in which all authority figures are grouped at the pinnacle. The laymen form the base of the pyramid and communication between the two follow a vertical order of top to bottom. This vertical order appears to be weakening since Vatican II and a new horizontal structure (collegiality) is emerging.

Vatican II did redefine the function of authority by creating an on-going Synod of Bishops and new Vatican committees to assist the Pope in his decision making. The Catholic Church appears no longer to function from an individual-autocratic structure as in the past, but rather more from a collegiate-democratic structure. A return to collegiality was hailed as a move forward in a world preoccupied with a democratic-horizontal view. However, it seems that this form of government is more a collegiality of elitism in which the final decisions remain in the hands of a few, and thus functions more as a collegiate-aristocratic government structure.

Because of this, Andrew Greeley recently criticized the Holy Office document Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (1976):

> Finally, one wonders whatever happened to the Bishops of the world. Collegiality and co-responsibility were supposed to mean that they shared in the major decisions of the Church. Yet major and critical documents are prepared in secret without any open discussion among the bishops or even an appearance of consultations. (W.C.R., Feb. 9, 1976.)

The Catholic Church, in particular, is reluctant to allow its members freedom to pursue their own thinking in matters concerning sexuality. As a Parent-Church, its members are obliged to judge their sexual behavior from the viewpoint of an external authority figure (hierarchical Church) rather than from an internal viewpoint arrived at through personal reflection guided by Church teachings. One concludes from the evidence that the Parent-Church is disinclined to relinquish control even when its "offspring" have grown to maturity.

Conclusion

The role of leadership in every society involves some control of subjects. However, in the area of sexuality, few would agree that leaders have the right to control the behavior and thought of its responsible members. It can be argued that the role of the Church is to nurture and educate its "children" to greater personal freedom and responsibility; however, we have witnessed that in the area of sexuality it has refused to do so. It has contributed a negative attitude towards sexuality by its insistance on control and by its refusal to explore openly new concepts of sexual understanding.

Many state that the Church's main task is to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. It is my contention that if the Church continues to promulgate rigid laws governing the sexual lives of its members, then more Christians will refuse to listen to Church authority and to the Gospel message the Church is supposed to proclaim.

PART II: ANTI-FEMINISM

Introduction

In the Gospels there exists few traces of genuine anti-feminism. Jesus treated the women he met as equals, professing that we all are one, male and female, under the Providence of God. During his ministry he was surrounded by women whom he loved and who loved him. His attitude towards his mother, Martha, and Mary, even Mary Magdalene and the woman caught in adultery was one of genuine interest and kindness. He responded to their presence as a man who viewed them not as sex objects to be despised or conquered, but as persons. Though the Gospels contained the seed for the emancipation of women, early Christians failed to make it grow and seemed to ignore the passage in which Jesus said: "We are all one under the Father." Failing to recognize Christ's positive attitude towards women, churchmen developed not only a negative opinion of women but even a disdain and at times a hatred for them.

Our study will focus briefly on anti-feminine statements and events in Church history which reflect a general hostility towards women fostered in the Christian tradition. It is my contention that the negative attitude towards sexuality and anti-feminism exhibited throughout Church history have mutually reinforced each other. Considerable evidence indicates that whenever anti-feminism was strong a negative attitude towards sexuality in general developed. Because of this relationship, an overview of anti-feminism and some reasons for its appearance will be delineated in this section.

Church and Anti-Feminism

No author has been quoted more than Paul to support a male chauvinist attitude towards women. There is no doubt that Paul and most of his contemporaries believed in male supremacy: "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent" (I Tim. 2:11). However, Paul's writings must be understood within the social context in which they were written. Paul insisted that Christians should live in harmony with the societal structure of the time in preparation for the imminent second coming of the Lord. He counselled women to be subject to their husbands as well as slaves to show unqualified respect for their masters. Throughout the centuries, Church authorities have used Paul's sayings as divine decrees that describe the immutable norm of the feminine condition. Christ's attitudes towards women were ignored and Paul's sayings were misunderstood, revealing a deep underlying phenomenon beginning to develop within the Church, a phenomenon unusual even in pagan societies: a hatred for women.

Chapter III of our study demonstrated that the early Christian theologians developed a strong negative attitude towards sexuality. These same authors left behind a legacy of misogynism in Christian tradition. We previously quoted Tertullian as saying: "You (women) are the devil's gateway. . . You destroyed so easily God's image, man" (P.L. 1, 1418b-19a, n. 1). Clement of Alexandria believed women to be inferior to man and he thought it shameful for a woman to think of what nature she has.

Jerome is quoted as saying: "As long as woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called man" (P.L. 26, 563, n. 5).

Ambrose expresses a similar idea: "She who does not believe is a woman and should be designated by the name of her sex, whereas she who believes progresses to perfect manhood, to the measure of the adulthood of Christ. She then dispenses with the name of her sex, the seductiveness of youth, the garrulousness of old age" (P.L. 15, 1844, n. 161).

John Chrysostom and his contemporaries debated whether women had souls. Augustine believed that since man fell because of a female (Eve) he was restored through a female (Mary): "Through the woman, death; through the woman, life" (P.L. 38, 1108, m. 2). He believed that in the rightful order of things women should be subjugated to men.

During the Middle Ages, Aquinas added little insight to the matter. He confused the issue by resurrecting the Aristotelian notion that the female may be defective in her individual nature. Her existence may be due to some defect in the active force (the father) or to some material indisposition, or to some external influence.

Even in reproduction the woman played an inferior role, according to Aquinas: "In the begetting of man, the mother supplies the formless matter of the body; and the latter receives its form through the formative power that is the semen of the father" (Aquinas II, II, 26, a. 10). The woman is "naturally defective" and plays a passive role in reproduction. Aquinas concludes that in a primary sense man and woman are in the image of God, "but in a secondary sense, the image of God is found in man, and not in woman: for man is the beginning and end of woman; as God is the beginning and end of every creature" (Aquinas I, I, 93, a. 4).

Though these writings are forms of anti-feminism, nothing compares to the heinous expression of hatred of women manifested by the Church during the infamous witchhunting. There are numerous reasons why the witchhunts originated and continued to dominate the Church for over three hundred years: superstition, ignorance, belief in the diabolic agency in storms, and a hatred of women are among the foremost.

In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII issued a bull Summis Desiderantes exhorting the clergy of Germany to leave no means untried to detect sorcerers, especially those who by evil weather destroy vineyards, gardens, and growing crops. He based his decree on Scripture: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." The greatest number of victims were women. They had been identified as the "gateway of hell," "perpetrator of evil," "Eve's helpmate" by the early Christian theologians. Two men in particular were authorized by the Pope to carry out his design: Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Institoris. These Dominican priests wrote a pseudo-theological work, The Witches Hammer. By torturing thousands of women, according to the means expressed in their book, they "proved" the existence of witches. Confessions by the thousands are still to be found in the judicial records of Germany and Central Europe.

In The Witches Hammer one reads: "Compared to the wickedness of woman, all other wickedness is minimal." An intense fear and hatred for "these women" grew throughout Europe. Dungeons and chambers contained every imaginable device of torture. Catholics and Protestants combined forces to extract confessions from women, many of whom were later executed. Many inquisitors, while torturing their victim, would demand that she confess to having sexual intercourse with Satan. Upon threat of further torture she would express every detail of the sexual experience. One can speculate on the psychopathology inherent to the torturing of a woman as she "confesses" her sexual experiences.

In 1692 a new outbreak of witchhunting began in Salem, Massachusetts. Two daughters complained of being pricked, pinched, cut, and fell into spasms and made strange speeches. A local Indian woman was accused of being possessed and later hanged. Similar incidents occurred to other women and the accused were tortured to death or hung. Finally, after hundreds of victims, some of the accusors recanted their testimony and confessed to holding personal grudges against the accused. Though the Salem witchhunt was similar to those of medieval Europe, they did not have the overtone of misogynism experienced in medieval Christendom. The unspeakable cruelty found in witchhunting demonstrates the extent to which churchmen, under the pretense of following Scripture, manifested a hatred for women which had been festering since the writings of the early theologians.

Reasons for Anti-Feminism

We have noted that many Pauline texts were misunderstood because the social context in which they were written was not considered. Churchmen used Pauline texts to bolster their own ideas and insecurities about women. Patristic and Medieval theologians were influenced by the prevailing societal beliefs. Women held an inferior social status: They had no right to vote or to speak in public, nor could they choose their marriage mate; they were subject to man in virtually every way. Another contributing factor was the Christian interpretation of the Genesis account: "This is to be called woman for this was taken from man" (Gen. 2:23). The literal interpretation of this passage formed the basis for the endocentric theory of the creation of woman. Christians concluded that if the first woman was created from man she must be inferior in nature, and therefore, secondary to man. Not only Christians but many pagan societies of the time believed women to be impure because of her menstrual flow and childbearing activities. Mary Douglas (1972) states that some of the most powerful taboos surrounded menstruation as a powerful and magical occurrence. Gwen Neville (1974) believes that religious traditions, theological doctrines, and church beliefs have contributed largely to the popular ambivalence, even revulsion, toward menstruation. She states that our society continues to foster "pollution taboos" by forbidding women to touch the sacred ceremonial objects. Women are often excluded from the religious altar, from serving the sacraments or performing priestly functions. She concludes that churchmen still fear women and continue to encourage the ancient taboos of the pre-scientific world.

Fear of Women

In Chapter III we implied that churchmen had an inordinate fear of their own sexuality. Patristic theologians warned Christians to subdue all sexual desires and passions; others were encouraged not to marry, and to live the celibate or virginal life. Sexual abstinence was demanded of the clergy and numerous laws were promulgated to regulate the sexual practices of the believers. Thousands of men fled to the desert in order to escape worldly stimulations that distracted them from prayer and contemplation.

What was the cause of this stimulation? In many cases it was thought to be women. Women were the stimuli which could inflame man's passions, interrupt his contemplation, distort his reasoning, and cause his soul's damnation. The fear of sexuality became equated with the fear of women. Because men could not accept their own sexuality, they experienced guilt whenever the stirrings of sexual impulses were felt. One can hypothesize that when the pain of guilt became too great, they projected their personal guilt onto the "guilty sex." Consequently, women became the source of their anxiety and of their guilt, not their own sexuality and the high "moral" standards they imposed upon themselves.

In clincial psychology guilt is defined as an anger or even hatred towards oneself for not measuring up to an internalized moral standard. In this case, the anger or hatred once directed towards self became directed toward women in general.

Christian leaders dealt with the "guilty sex" in two general ways. Woman was seen as a temptress, a seductive creature devoid of dignified human traits; or, at the other extreme, she was viewed as a pure celestial virgin, asexual in nature and elevated above man's reproach or touch.

The former view was manifested in their interpretation of the

Genesis account. It was Eve who tempted Adam and brought misery and damnation to man. For the Greeks, it was Pandora, who, by the plan of Zeus, unleashed upon mankind all evil, all sickness, and all death. Women, personified by Eve, are dangerous and fearsome creatures because they possess the power to seduce men, snaring them in their sexual web. That is why Tertullian called them "the devil's gateway" and why some monks fled to the desert to seek solitude, while others built monasteries where no woman could enter. Woman was the temptress whose charms were used by the devil to make man lose his potential perfection.

Many laws of the Church are designed to exclude women and to "protect" the celibate from contamination. An *extreme* form of these laws is practiced by the monks of the Eastern Rite in the Orthodox monasteries of Mount Athos, where everything feminine or even female is so strictly forbidden that no ewes or hens, no female cattle or fowl of any kind are permitted to cross the boundary wall (de Vinck, 1970).

By the same token, men who feared women often portrayed her as a celestial virgin, devoid of all sexual traits; her greatest quality was her virginity. Women were encouraged to remain virgins, consecrating themselves to God and remaining for the most part in a protected society called convents. They were to model Mary, the Mother of God, who remained a virgin through God's intervention even though she gave birth to a son. Christian leaders related to women as asexual and began to write about her attributes in symbolic terms. One of the classics of this sort is Gertrude Von le Fort's *The Eternal Woman* in which he claims to interpret "the significance of woman, not in the light of her psychological or biological, her historical or social position, but under her symbolic aspect" (1962, p.xiii). What men such as Von le Fort fail to recognize is that "symbolic aspects" derive from psychological, biological, historical, and social facts and unless they are rooted in an accurate knowledge of women as persons they are meaningless. Writers such as Von le Fort fail to recognize women as individuals and by placing her on a virginal pedestal away from man's reach only reveals their ignorance of human nature.

Both symbolic extremes, that of the sexual creature devoid of other human traits and the asexual virgin, betray not only an ignorance of women-as-persons but a fear of becoming involved with them.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that the Church has contributed significantly to the misogynistic attitude found in Western civilization. Though Jesus' message was one of equality for both male and female, churchmen failed to recognize this message. There are many societal factors that have contributed to anti-feminism but one appears to be more significant than the others, fear. It was suggested that Church leaders, being celibates themselves, reacted to the "stimuli" which threatened their celibacy. Women were kept at a distance, symbolized as the "guilty sex" intent on trapping man or as the asexual creature, akin to celestial beings. Both these extremes appear to reveal a fear and ignorance of women as persons which eventually contributed for some to their hatred.

Today, we are experiencing various forms of a "Sexual Revolution." One of the contributing factors to this "Revolution" is Women's Liberation. Our society is witnessing numerous changes in women's status: the right to vote, equal work opportunity, equality in marriage. However, the institutional Church is slow to change its attitudes towards women. They have not gained a right to vote nor permitted equal work opportunities in the major Christian Churches. If the institutional Church continues to perpetuate its anti-feminist attitude inherited from the early Church, it will continue to be irrelevant for many and will further alienate itself from those who are striving to gain a sense of personhood for women. Churchmen would do well to ponder anew the words of Paul:

> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Jesus Christ. (Ga. 3:28.)

PART III: AGE OF TRANSITION: SEXUAL IDENTITY DIFFUSION

Introduction

We have noted that a negative attitude towards sexuality made its appearance at the beginning of the Patristic Age. This attitude began to take form in laws issued by the Church and in the life style of Christians. We have shown that some of these laws derived from the Council of Elvira (309) around the time Anthony and his followers began populating the Egyptian desert in search of an ascetic life of penance and prayer from which eventually flourished monasticism (cf. Chapter III, Monasticism). In this section of our study, I shall propose that some of the sexual codes enforced by the Church and some of the abuses inherent within Christian asceticism reflect symptoms of a sexual identity diffusion caused by an Age of Transition which was brought on in part by the collapse of the Roman Empire and in part by the emergence of the Christian Church as one of the new governing powers of the Western world.

Age of Transition

When a society is challenged by new horizons and the old moorings upon which that society is based begin to weaken or become inadequate, and new institutions and values replace the old, we witness an Age of Transition. Rollo May (1953) believes that modern man is living in such an Age. He identifies as tell-tale signs of this phenomenon man's loneliness, emptiness and anxiety characterized by feelings of being "caught" or "overwhelmed" by events over which he has little control. These "maladies" are caused by a loss of value-centeredness within ourselves and the society as a whole. A loss of the sense of self (what is my worth or dignity as a human person) and finally being "out of touch" with nature and the sense of tragedy. May believes that people finally become detached, apathetic, or violent.

It is my hypothesis that during the decades when the Church was coming to grips with its role in Western history, society was undergoing a transition similar to that described by May. The Pax Romana (14 B.C. - A.D. 192) had been shattered by internal as well as external political strife. Roman leadership was divided until 324 when Constantine defeated Licinius making him the sole Augustus. Converted at the Battle of the Melvian Bridge (312) Constantine was the first Roman Emperor proclaiming Christianity the official religion. By the middle of the fourth century barbarians began invading the Eastern frontier. The European provinces were attacked by the Germanic people of the North. Finally, in 410, the Visigoths attacked and conquered Rome while Vandals ravaged Gaul at the same time, and finally settled in Spain (409 - 429). Roman law no longer ruled the known world and the Greek-Roman gods were powerless. The Church had become a political-religious force (cf. Pope Leo I, in 452, persuading Attila the Hun not to enter central Italy) by the end of the fourth century.

At the beginning of the fourth century Christians began to feel "overwhelmed" and searched for new ways to discover a sense of self and a sense of identity. Laeuchli (1972), analyzing the Council of Elvira, believes that the struggle encountered at that particular Council exemplifies the personal identity struggle Christians were experiencing at the time. Behind the scenes of the Council the Church was struggling for an identity within the prevailing society. Clerics responded to this struggle by exerting strong leadership over their people, offering them a social framework in which they could feel accepted. Interesting to our study is that fact that the focus of Christian identity in this Council concerned itself with asceticism and the regulation of sexual behavior rather than with pagan idolatry or even with doctrinal clarification.

Christians at the time of this Council (309) were searching for a more stable identity because societal values and dominant institutions were severely shaken, if not destroyed. They accepted the sexual identity presented by their leaders even though it was rooted in misogynism, sexual misconceptions, and faulty exegesis. They accepted the clerical image of the "ideal" man, and they also accepted the Church as a society of celibate leaders imposing sexual regulations on its members. This acceptance was in keeping with the crisis they were suffering; for, when a person's identity is severely shaken or questioned, he often turns to the ideological potential of a society (in this case the Church) that speaks forcefully and clearly (ecclesiastical laws) in order to feel a sense of "belongingness," "rootedness" or affirmation.

The person is prepared to install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity.

Some Christians defined their new personal identity by withdrawing from traditional heterosexuality, and choosing celibacy, sexual abstinence in marriage, mortification of the body, and asceticism. They defined themselves less in man-woman relationships and more in abstinence or separation relationships; young girls professed marriage to Christ, unions were formed in which men introduced young ladies into their homes with promises never to have sexual relationships, husband and wife lived together as brother and sister. This fear of heterosexuality became so great that by the end of the fourth century the monastic population of Egypt was nearly equal to its urban population (Lecky, 1902). The Church was developing a definite revulsion towards most forms of sexual expression while encouraging an "athletic asceticism" by which men and women went to extremes in mortifying their bodies.

Sexual Identity Diffusion

The acceptance of sexual identity in terms of flight from heterosexuality or intense dislike of everything sexual is understood by Erickson (1968) as a stage of crisis in personality development. Erickson sees personal growth requiring eight stages of development each having its own crisis to be resolved before the individual progresses to the next stage. The crisis is fostered by an inner-outer struggle which is resolved by integrating all the forces at work and progressing to the next stage. One crucial stage of identity formation is lived during adolescence when the individual integrates his present experiences with his past. This is a crucial period of transition during which he comes to terms with his sexuality. Erickson states that if a flight from heterosexuality continues during adolescence (as it was during pre-adolescence) the person will not develop a firm sense of ego identity nor will he likely form successful intimate relationships in later life. He will fear loss of ego in close affiliations, especially sexual unions, thereby leaving him isolated. Erickson (1963) concludes that "where this (role confusion) is based on a strong previous doubt as to one's sexual identity, delinquent and outright psychotic episodes are not uncommon" (p. 262). But if one passes successfully through this stage of identity formation and true intimacy is later experienced, sex becomes less obsessive, overcompensation less necessary, and sadistic controls superfluous.

It appears that many Christians of this Transitional Age were experiencing a crisis similar to that described by Erickson. Christians were uprooted and sensed a discontinuity with the past (similar to the adolescent who attempts to break with his past) and searched for stability by anchoring to the ideals offered by the newly emerging Church structure. Because the Church suggested flight from heterosexuality (similar to the phenomenon experienced in pre-adolescence) many Christians never resolved their sexual crisis. They continued their flight from normal sexual relationships by idealizing virginity and celibacy, by glorifying body-abuse, and by their exodus into the desert. Unlike the adolescent who resolves his sexual identity crisis by entering into active heterosexual relationships, many Christians perpetuated their sexual crisis through abstinence and by developing a disdain, even hatred, for everything or everyone sexual. Consequently, the Christian sexual crisis was never resolved and sexual obsessions continued in unhealthy ways such as witchhunting.

Conclusion

Though the evidence is conjectural, I hypothesize that many Christians suffered a severe loss of personal and social identity because of the transitions occurring in their society. As a result of their identity diffusion many accepted the negative attitude of sexuality expressed by their clerical leaders. This phenomenon continued throughout the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, and is found in various forms in our Contemporary Age. An extreme form was recently demonstrated by a group of Coptic monks who live in monasteries on the small islands of Quebran and Dag-Stephanos on Lake Tana, at the head of the Blue Nile. It has been told that a few years ago a boat loaded with men and women capsized close to the island shore. The monks waded in and helped the men to land but the women were left to drown.

This extreme case of the flight from heterosexuality is more dramatic than the subtle forms found in our society: the hostile treatment by some clerical celibates toward women parishioners is a more likely manifestation; or, Christian men and women suspicious of each other because of their unresolved sexual problems. One cannot conclusively establish that these expressions of sexual conflicts stem directly from the Christian attitudes which began in the early years of Christianity, but one can conclude from the evidence that these attitudes have contributed significantly to the negative outlook toward sexuality in the Christian tradition.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this chapter we focused on the Church as a society governed by a clerical elite. By enforcing sexual codes the hierarchy enhanced its control over the layman. The Church has understood itself as a parent who guides and instructs its children, and cases were cited when the Parent-Church insisted on its dominant role of parent, imposing its views in matters of personal conscience. In matters of sexuality the Parent-Church is reluctant to allow its members to govern their own lives. A case in point in Roman Catholicism was Vatican II when the vital issues of sexual behavior were never discussed in the open forum of the Council but decrees concerning them were later issued by a handful of Vatican officials.

Some research has shown (Greeley, 1976) that many Catholics no longer believe that external authority should govern their sexual behavior. Many view Church authority as "out of touch" with their daily lives and turn to a more intrinsic way of evaluating moral decisions based on personal beliefs and feelings in tune to their daily experiences.

Our study has shown the Church played an important role in promoting anti-feminism. The early Fathers of the Church propogated attitudes towards women which stood in direct opposition to the accepting attitudes exhibited by Jesus. Numerous examples of misogynism found in the Church punctuate our historical overview. We gave as the predominant reason a basic fear many churchmen had towards woman; treating her as the pure, celestial virgin or as a seductive temptress.

Finally, we explored the possibility that early Christians lived through an Age of Transition which affected their normal psychosexual development and caused many to flee normal heterosexual relationships. These factors have contributed to the pervasive negative sexual attitudes the contemporary Christian has inherited from the past.

But do these attitudes continue to plague the twentieth century Christian? Are they still affecting his sexual outlook? If so, how does the Christian begin to change his sexual attitudes and in what direction does he go? An attempt to answer these questions will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARDS A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Historical Outlook

Our study discloses that a persistent negative attitude towards sexuality existed in the Church since the time of Paul. We have provided evidence that numerous Christian writers and leaders possessed an inordinate suspicion, fear and even disdain for the human body, especially its sexual nature. Patristic theologians, in particular, had sown seeds of anti-sexuality which flourished throughout Church history. These churchmen, influenced by their contemporary culture and nourished by personal fears, instructed Christians to abstain from sexual union, and to live the "superior" life of virginity and celibacy. They expounded on the "dangers" of sexual experience, the "evils" of women, and the "unholiness" of sexual pleasure. Within a brief period of history these anti-sexual attitudes were formulated into laws which influenced the lives of Christians for over a thousand years.

We have given evidence that the Protestant Reformers, Luther and Calvin, brought a greater realism to the issue of sexuality but could not fully overcome the sexual biases entrenched over the centuries. The Roman Catholic Church, reacting to the Protestant Reformation, issued new laws at the Council of Trent reflecting the same sexual tradition inherited from the Patristic Age. Only the advent of the Age of Science forced the Church to realign its thinking on sexuality. The very foundation of Christian thought on sexuality was challenged by man's changing consciousness of himself as understood within the framework of the behavioral sciences. Modern man was forced to look at new dimensions of human sexual relations which often contradicted religious "truths" held sacred for centuries.

However, attitudes are slow to change and we witness today some of the same attitudes described in this historical study. These attitudes are labeled "irrational" by men such as Ellis (1958), but while tracing their causes we found that they quite "rationally" follow their origins. We have enumerated five causes that have contributed significantly to sexual negativism. These include:

1. Dualistic theology and philosophy prevalent at the time of the Patristic Age contributed to man's belief that his nature is divided into body and soul. This dichotomy made man's body inferior to the more noble, spiritual, immortal aspect of his nature. The flesh became a hindrance to man's spiritual progress because of its impulses, passions, and limitations. The body eventually became suspect and for some, evil, because it disrupted the soul's activity of contemplating God.

   In contemporary society some Christians continue to believe that the body is essentially evil. Some Christian ministers continue to preach of the dire consequences of sexual indulgences, not because of a moral disorder inherent in over-indulgence, but because of an evilness inherent to the flesh itself. In similar vein, the creators of pornographic literature and movies endorse the same split in man's nature by divorcing his physical sexual expression from his spiritual dimension. Both extremes have lost sight of the Biblical concept of man which endorses the unity of body-soul.

2. Our study pointed out three sexual misconceptions found in the Christian tradition. Man believed that the wasting of semen was sinful because the male seed contained the full potential of a future child. Recently, Declarations on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (Jan., 1976), an official document from the Vatican, restated that masturbation is an "intrinsically and seriously disordered act . . . because it is outside normal conjugal relations." One cannot conclude that this recent document is based on the ancient belief of semen waste but it does reveal that a condemning attitude by the official Catholic Church towards this form of semen waste still exists.

Our study demonstrates that Christians endorsed the belief that sexual drives are profoundly influenced by a disordered act of the will (known to theologians as concupiscence) and that all sexual expression should be under the control of reason because of the sinfulness intrinsic to unbridled passionate expressions. Today, these beliefs continue to be held by many Christians. We read in the above mentioned Vatican document: "One will have to examine whether the individual is using the necessary means, both natural and supernatural, which Christian asceticism, from its long experience recommends for overcoming the passions and progressing in virtue." The document implies that to progress in virtue one must overcome sexual passions as if passion itself is dangerous or evil.

3. We examined the need of societal leaders to control their subjects through the enforcement of laws governing sexual expression. The Church is a society with a ruling hierarchy that often yielded to the need to control. During the fourth century, laws were enacted

to govern the sexual behavior of Christians, which found expression in the Penitentials and later contributed to the codes of Canon Law presently found in Roman Catholicism. These laws helped the clerical elite gain greater control over laymen.

In our contemporary society many non-Catholics as well as Catholics are astonished to find laws issued from Rome which attempt to control the sexual expression of Church members. Many Catholics suffered a "crisis of faith" when the Pope declared that all forms of artificial birth control are immoral (Humanae Vitae, 1968). The recent document, Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (1976), condemned all premarital intercourse, masturbation, and homosexual acts. Rome has also restated its stand on priestly celibacy and the immorality of divorce. We are not contending the role of the Catholic hierarchy to enlighten its laymen on moral issues, but to issue statements based on the theology of the Middle Ages, couched in medieval scholasticism, expresses an attitude of insolence towards the modern Christian and rebukes recent findings from the behavioral sciences.

4. Our study has shown that the Church has helped foster anti-feminism. Women have been treated by the institutional Church as the "temptress," the "guilty sex," or as the celestial virgin, asexual in nature, devoid of all sexual traits. Both extremes reveal a deep seated misogynism and fear of women in general.

Today, women are still treated by some as the purely sexual creature found in the "girlie" magazines or as the "eternal feminine" spoken of by writers such as Teilhard de Chardin, Jaspers, Stein, and Berdyaev. Daly (1975) concluded in her book, The Church and the Second Sex: "Christianity and the Catholic Church in particular, has not yet faced its responsibility to exorcise the devil of sexual prejudice. If the institutional Church fails to recognize women as equal to men then Christianity will be seen as the inevitable enemy of human progress" (p. 219). The heated debate whether women should be allowed to exercise ministerial duties or vote on critical Church issues testifies to the fact that Church leaders have not come to an agreement on sexual equality within the Church structure.

5. We hypothesized that ecclesiastical laws governing sexual behavior appeared at a time of transition when Christians suffered a severe loss of personal identity manifested by a flight from heterosexuality and a general repugnance toward things sexual. Rollo May (1953, 1969) states that modern man is living in an Age of Transition similar to that of fourth century Christianity. He notes that contemporary man is suffering from a new form of Puritanism by which he separates his feelings and passions from his sexual acts because of his fears and his identity loss. May concludes that modern man is searching desperately for a more firm identity and attempts, at times, to find it in promiscuity. We have noted that both forms of flight (the flight to heterosexuality of the twentieth century and the flight from heterosexuality of the fourth) are simply different expressions of the depersonalization of sexuality, symptoms of two Ages in which people have not experienced a stable and distinct identity of their own.

There is much evidence that the negative attitudes of the past remain and continue to plague us at a time when society is becoming more aware of the importance of a healthy outlook on sexuality. It is, therefore, the task of the Christian to identify his inherited sexual attitudes and their contributing factors in order to sort out the negative elements of this tradition which prevent him from enjoying all dimensions of his sexuality. One of the purposes of this study is to assist in this task.

Contemporary Christians in Conflict

The contemporary Christian Community has undergone dramatic changes during the second half of this century. The "death of God" theology reflects the weakening of the traditional image of God and religion couched in the symbolism of the past. More and more "religious" people appear to be drawn into themselves, discovering the depth and magnitude of their inner life, or into social reform where the possibility of a richer understanding of God and religion are found. These events reflect man's questioning of the role of extroverted religious life in Western culture.

A recent survey for Man Alive (May, 1976) throughout Canada indicated that the majority of Christians no longer support the institutional Church. Ninety-five percent of those interviewed indicated that they prayed to God but only thirty-five claimed a church affiliation. The report concluded that the trend among Christians in Canada (and this could as well apply to the United States) is towards a more personal religious life outside the institutional Church.

The exodus from the institutional Church expresses what many Christians label as a personal crisis of faith. Baum (1971) attributes this crisis to the irreconcilable position of the truth of their daily lives with their inherited religious outlook. He believes that many Christians experience God more in their daily lives than in their formalized religion. But Baum believes that the label of "crisis of faith" is superficial. He states that the crisis lies more in the need of new theological methods by which the modern Christian may reinterpret and reassimilate his inherited religion. Christians have not lost faith in God or Christ but in the Church and its outdated application of the Gospel message.

Bernard Lonergan states that contemporary Christians are not suffering from a crisis of faith but rather from a crisis of culture. He believes that classical culture, in which the Christian message had been formulated, is dying and that the institutional Church appears irrelevant because it continues to cling to the symbols of a past culture.

Other theologians agree with Baum and Lonergan that Christians often mislabel their conflict as a "crisis of faith." For example, many Catholics experienced a "crisis of faith" when they could not follow the Vatican directives on birth control. The conflict was more between the personal experiences of these Catholics and an outdated directive. The modern Christian finds it difficult to accept the heritage of an alien culture which contradicts his present experience. Our study demonstrated that much of the Christian tradition regarding sexuality did not reflect either the message of Christ or the Jewish concept of man, but rather it derived from the culture in which the Church formulated its doctrines.

The Therapist

Therapists encounter clients who are seriously disturbed by negative sexual feelings. These clients complain about sexual fears instilled in them by parents, teachers, and clergymen. Often they were taught that all sexual experience before marriage is wrong or sinful. The Catholic Church, in particular, has presented a diminished understanding of human sexuality. Stories were told to instill fear among those who might attempt to experiment sexually. Young Catholics heard stories similar to the one in which a teen-aged girl danced "too" close to her boy friend; when she arrived home that evening she bore the burning imprint of a hand on her back (implying that she had danced with the devil). Priests and nuns imposed on impressionable minds the denials, suppressions, and fears that they themselves experienced. As a result, Catholics were often disturbed by sexual desires or sexual fantasy regardless of their nature or intent.

Consequently, many Christians suffer from guilt feelings related to their sexuality. The therapist who is unaware of the complexities of Church-sex related problems may not only retard progress but create a greater crisis in the client. Many of these clients do not want to reject their religion (as some therapists might encourage) but need to unravel the negative sexual beliefs in their religion. Blenkinsopp (1969) states that the Christian must perform the work of an exorcist by getting rid of the "rotted past." He must work like the analyst to dissolve the inauthentic sense of guilt which his client has inherited from his own past, deeply colored by the cultural and religious values of his parents and of the whole milieu in which he was formed. Blenkinsopp finally concludes: "We (Christians) have the duty of getting the past off our backs, of unburdening, which involves awareness that the past is still subtly and invisibly with us" (p. 44). The conflict of many Christians is not so much a "crisis of faith" as a conflict of realigning their present experiences and beliefs and to dissolve the guilt arising from the discrepancy between their past and present beliefs.

Masters and Johnson (1970) suggest that sexual dysfunctioning is due, in large part, to an individual's value system. Basic to all Masters and Johnson treatment techniques is the premise that attitudes (and ignorance) rather than physical illness are responsible for most sexual problems. It is naive to think that a behavior program will resolve all problems related to sexual dysfunctioning. Though behavior programs have proven effective, therapists are aware that there is a need to assist the client in unraveling the complexities which constitute his values. Our study of the origins of Christian attitudes towards sexuality might assist not only the therapist and his clients but special interests groups such as priests and nuns who have left Church ministry because of the celibacy issue, religious leaders and educators who are attempting to understand the dynamics of sexuality. It is important to understand the flow not only of our personal history but that of human history as well. Strayer (1943) reflecting on the value of history stated: "History at its best gives us a real chance of reacting sensibly to a new situation. It does not guarantee the correctness of our response but it should improve the quality of our judgment" (p. 14).

Psycho-theological Considerations

Our study examined the negative sexual attitudes in the Christian tradition and interpreted reasons for its development. This is the first step in establishing a more healthy outlook on sexuality from the Christian viewpoint. A task of future studies is to attempt a merger of new theological perspectives with insights discovered by the behavioral sciences. We might call this merger a "psycho-theological perspective." Christians need a new theological anthropology of sexuality which will harmonize with their life experiences. In order to accomplish this task, Baum (1971) suggests a number of ways Christians can examine their faith.

The Imminent God

Christians have often believed that God was "up there" and very much out of reach or "over there" in another time and era. Modern theologians are suggesting that Christians should consider God as present in the here and now, revealing Himself in our daily experiences. Christians believing that God revealed Himself in history should not negate the fact that He continues to reveal Himself in the present time. Theologians are saying that the task of modern Christians is to abandon the extrinsic dimension of God and focus on the intrinsic presence of God within themselves. They state that religion has become less relevant because the Church has presented information about heavenly realities that has nothing to do with daily experience and distracts Christians from their religious task of living responsibly.

The Gospel message is not extrinsic to life but rather flows from it. Theologians suggest that as the Christian experiences more deeply his own life he will come to a greater understanding of the Gospel. The Gospel will then help clarify what is already present and lay hold of the transcendent which is imminent in our daily lives. The Christian faith, coupled with the Gospel, is not new knowledge but rather makes explicit the divine self-communication that is gratuitously offered in human life. It is not external to human experience but rather is at the heart of it. This is nothing new for the Christian for the Old and New Testament always spoke of God's presence in the world not outside of it: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All that came to be had life in Him" (Jn. 1: 1-2). Even the atheist who reaches out for what is true and holy, regardless of his theoretical statements of reality, is in fact under the influence of God's revelation and grace.

The Christian must listen to the truth wherever it is found, through his own personal experience or the findings of anthropology, sociology, and psychology. In the area of sexuality man is coming to a greater depth of understanding. Sexuality is more than a physical expression of one's genitals. It is defined as everything the individual is, thinks, feels or does during his entire life span as related to his being male or female (Calderone, 1974). Sexuality is at the core of self-definition. When speaking of masculine and feminine traits, one goes far beyond the physical characteristics of a person and takes in the feminine and masculine way of perceiving and expressing emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical life. Sexuality is not so much what one has but rather what one is. The behavioral sciences have shown that sexuality does not suddenly appear in one period (puberty) of development but is an ongoing process from birth to death. They have demonstrated that our sexuality is not limited to the act of procreation but is included in virtually every human encounter. Sexuality is not only the medium by which we express who we are but is an essential factor in the definition of who we are.

It is the task of the contemporary Christian to combine the new dimensions of sexuality with a new theological outlook. Marc Oraison (1967) attempts this combination when he states: "Sexuality is the existential crossroads of consciousness of self in relation to other, of being, and of time, of life and of death . . . It is the fundamental fact of life and the essential way by which the human arrives at spiritual consciousness" (p. 55). Yung (1934) also spoke of the same phenomenon when he said: "Out of the fullness of life you will give birth to your religion, only then will you be blessed" (p.250). If the Christian is to bring a new and richer dimension to sexuality and escape the negative attitudes of his tradition then he must risk new discoveries presented to him by the behavioral sciences and new perspectives in theology. There appears to be a radical jump from the traditional views of sexuality to contemporary ones. However, the jump is more in the Christian interpretation of his faith and its application to the contemporary understanding of sexuality than in any new discovery in sexuality itself.

Sexual Laws and the Church

From the fourth century to our present time laws have been enforced by the hierarchy in order to control the behavior of Church members. If the Christian is to feel free enough to pursue a more responsible understanding of his sexuality then he must understand the function of the Church. The task of the Church is to proclaim and celebrate Christ's presence in the world. Its fellowship extends beyond its boundaries to include men in whom the Spirit is at work. The Church is not merely the hierarchy promulgating new laws, but rather it is the "People of God" attentive to the working of grace in their daily lives. Christians must learn to recognize that the stress given by ecclesiastical government to authority, obedience, and the institutional aspects of religion and worship is not derived from the Christian message, but corresponds to the unavowed and usually unconscious ideological trend present in the government body (Baum, 1971). The Church's doctrinal system presents the Gospel with an emphasis that tends to separate the Church from other communities, elevate it above other people, defend its inherited privileges, and above all, make it easier for the ecclesiastical government to rule.

The task of the Church is to assist in the unification of mankind. It should be our guide in interpreting the mysteries inherent to our personal lives and our world. It was not intended to serve as a moralistic super-ego distributing laws to govern our every move. On the contrary, one task is to save man from the domination of his super-ego, freeing him to experience and discover the workings of God in his life.

The Christian pursuing new understandings into his sexuality will turn to his Church for guidance and not for answers. The Church is comprised of people who are open to new life and the truth. This dimension of Church forces Christians to listen attentively to the promptings of God in their own sexual experiences and to the discoveries of others open to the truth. Though religious leaders can be of service, Christians are not enslaved to their dictates. This understanding of Church lays a heavy responsibility on personal integrity and is not an escape from the obligations inherent in the Gospel message. It shifts the Christian from an ethics of law (the formulation of sexual morality in terms of law) to an ethics of responsibility (the formulation of sexual morality in terms of values and their interaction). The traditional legal ethics that we have studied is no longer adequate for the Christian living in the conditions of modern society.

Conclusion

Through our sexuality we experience numerous dimensions of our lives and those of others, for one can experience faith, hope, and love in an open dialogue with another. In the sexual act, if caring and loving is present, a profound sense of trust will encourage the partners to enter even deeper into a dialogue with life in which the presence of God is felt.

This attitude is alien to the one inherited by most Christians. Sexuality no longer is the scapegoat of everything wrong with man. It becomes not only the vehicle but the very experience of the Christian's encounter with God. It is no longer the secret topic of back room talk but rather the Good News that God is present in all human activity, especially sexuality.

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